



Task Force to Study the Statewide Response to Minors Exposed to Domestic Violence

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 22, 2015

10:00 A.M. in Room 2A of the LOB

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 A.M. by Co-Chair Garry Lapidus

The following committee members were present: Mary Painter, Cheryl Jacques, Gina Beebe (for Linda Harris) Karen O'Connor, Sarah Eagan, Christine Rapillo, Laura DeLeo, Karen Jarmoc (Co-chair), Garry Lapidus (Co-Chair), Cynthia Mahon, Jon Fontneau, Jessica Veilleux, Kayte Cwikla-Mass, Nina Livingston, Jennifer Celentano, Damioin Grasso, Rachel Pawloski, Elizabeth Bozzuto, Stephen Grant and Faith Voswinkel.

Members introduced themselves.

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and accepted by the members.

Co-Chair, Karen Jarmoc stated that today's meeting will be focused on law enforcement and interventions and policies that are available in Connecticut. She continued to say that Connecticut has a state wide model policy for law enforcement's response to family violence that was created as a result of a prior task force. Karen went on to say that, potentially, there is opportunity for this task force to make an assessment and offer some recommendations and that there is a permanent governing council that oversees this model policy, so we want to make sure that this task force and the governing council are in alignment with each other.

Karen Jarmoc thanks Maggie Adair at the Office of Early Childhood for providing the task force with follow up information. Karen then introduced Dora Schriro, Commissioner, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection.

Commissioner Schriro gave her presentation on behalf of her agency.

Faith Voswinkel shared that she was particularly interested in knowing if there was a way to differentiate the age of the child on the scene for example, are there children under 3 present, are there pre-school aged or school aged children present.

Commissioner Schriro replied that the form they use has a place for date of birth, that assumes that someone is there and competent to give the date of birth, and at a young age it is not likely to be the child. She continued that to the extent that they can improve and add some additional drop down fields or have additional training bring to the troopers awareness what should be included in the remarks section. She went onto say that they can write additional software so they can pull more of this information out.

Faith Voswinkel thanked Commissioner Schriro for her response.

Commissioner Schriro commented that if Faith had other specific requests that Faith can email her directly or communicate through Trooper O'Connor.

Karen Jarmoc thanked Commissioner Schriro for her presentation. She went on to say that as a task force the question would be what is relevant, and that if the task force wants to capture data that would be the question for this group to grapple with and come up with some answers. Karen asked Commissioner Schriro if that data entry point would be the place to ID children.

Commissioner Schriro replied that under the relationship code you have "F" "Other Relative Residing in Home," so that would apply to children, but that the task force may prefer to have children specifically identified.

Karen Jarmoc commented that she thinks that might be important and also if there is a way for the task force to make some recommendations around what does "involved" mean, what does "present" mean, what does "NA" mean.

Commissioner Schriro indicated that the task force might also want to look at number 22 which is "A Child Under 18 Was Involved/Present." She offered that an additional question might helpful to identify a younger cohort of children.

Karen Jarmoc asked Commissioner Schriro if she had any opinion the Model Policy.

Commissioner Schriro replied that the real experts are the police officers and the state troopers in the field so it might be worthwhile to get their thoughts about it.

Jon Fontneau said that he agreed with Commissioner Schriro that boots on the ground police officers will give a much better perspective. He also added that if the children attend school it would be helpful to know which school they attend would be helpful for local police.

Commissioner Schriro said that Jon made a good point to help the outreach made by law enforcement to the school the next day, otherwise the school will not know that the event occurred and the child may be off his/her game, if they are even able to be in school.

Karen Jarmoc asked if in terms of training, is it 20 hours specific to family violence for any new trooper and what ongoing training is like.

Karen O'Connor replied that recruit based training is 20 hours, which is outside of minimal facts training, in domestic violence and that troopers receive minimal facts training every year, which amounts to 4 hours yearly.

Cynthia Mahon asked if it would be helpful to add to #22 if a DCF referral was made and how can an attorney general in the child protection department or a DCF worker access these forms.

Commissioner Schriro replied that she is sure there is a way to access the forms, but she doesn't know what the mechanism so she will report back to the co-chairs with that information.

Jennifer Celentano asked what the protocol that the State Police use when they go to the scene to deal with children, in particular when there is a dual arrest.

Karen O'Connor responded that the state police train to identify a primary aggressor and if possible take the primary aggressor into custody, serve the other party with a misdemeanor summons and a court date and a DCF referral is made. She continued that if both parties are arrested they call DCF immediately, but if there is a family member that the child can go to they make every effort to make that happen.

Garry Lapidus thanked Commissioner Schriro for her remarks and asked if she could share with the task force members one change in her agency in policy or practice that she would suggest to reduce the impact of this problem, what would that be.

Commissioner Schriro replied that her agency is going to be doing strategic planning in the fall but that she doesn't know what the answer to Garry's question is yet, but that she is confident that they are going to find it.

Jessica Veilleux asked Commissioner Schriro if a box could be added for "Referral to Hospital or VA Center" regarding mental health issues witnessed by the police officer.

Commissioner Schriro that she is confident that there is opportunity to add more fields.

Jessica Veilleux thanked the Commissioner for her response and said that she doesn't see anything about verbal threats on the form and indicated that [Public Act 12-114 \(Summary of PA 12-114\)](#) was changed to include the abuse of threatening. She asked where that could be added.

Commissioner Schriro replied that there is threatening.

Jessica Veilleux shared that there are 2 definitions of threatening one is imminent and one is later in the day or throwing an object.

Commissioner Schriro responded that we need to add it with a drop down box with the nature of the threats or provide training that it is added under remarks.

Jessica Veilleux replied, yes, per [Public Act 12-114](#).

Karen O'Connor added power and control wheel lists several types of abuse including economic abuse, emotional abuse and abusing children. She went on to say that the form is for collecting data and the report will contain the specific types of abuse observed, which goes hand in hand with identifying a primary aggressor.

Faith Voswinkel asked if this form is only done if there is an arrest.

Commissioner Schriro responded that the form says "Arrest Yes/No" so it is completed.

Faith Voswinkel asked for clarification that it's completed for any time there is a call and they are going for family violence.

Jon Fontneau replied yes.

Karen Jarmoc said that Faith raised another question. She asked for clarification that the form is only submitted in terms of how data is being captured when there is an arrest made and if there is not an arrest made, the localized department retains the form.

Jon Fontneau replied that it goes into their records management.

Karen Jarmoc offered that it might be meaningful for everyone to understand what is going on if there is not an arrest.

Jon Fontneau asked for clarification that Karen was asking who would use this if there was not an arrest.

Karen Jarmoc replied, yes.

Commissioner Schriro stated that a record is created; it's just whether it makes its way to everyone for particular reports. She continued that she thinks having the whole picture is worthwhile.

Karen Jarmoc commented that she agrees with the Commissioner. She went on to say that just because children are present at the scene doesn't mean that there is a mandated DCF report.

Jason Lange and Lt. Sean Grant did their presentation.

Karen Jarmoc said that it would be helpful to understand, broadly, why is this unique response important and asked if we are talking about additional dollars for training and is EMPS a 45 minute response.

Amy Evison replied that their average response time is 29 minutes.

Karen Jarmoc asked if EMPS is DCF funded and asked how many are in the state.

Mary Painter replied that there are close to 200 employees.

Amy Evison said there are 6 providers and a few subcontractors.

Karen Jarmoc restated that state-wide there are 6 providers maintaining the contract for EMPS.

Mary Painter replied, yes.

Jennifer Celentano asked if the Manchester pilot program and Waterbury were the first 2 pilot programs, what was the cost for the Manchester program in additional funding. She continued that if this was implemented state wide there would be a need to exponentially increase the EMPS responders.

Amy Evison said that at this point they are not seeing a high level of referrals but if it dramatically increased staffing changes would have to be considered and that they are also third party for their services so as they continue to see kids, they can bill third party to supplement staffing.

Jennifer Celentano asked if just Manchester was using this model.

Amy Evison replied that it is just Manchester.

Jennifer Celentano asked if others picked up this model, would they need more funding.

Jason Lange replied that it would depend upon the use. He continued that prior to REACT there was 1 call in 12 months to EMPS and in most police departments it is closer to 0. Jason said the increase is only to 43 in 1 year, which is not going to require any extra resources at that scale.

Mary Painter shared that at the local community level interested police departments and EMPS teams could work on this together without additional funding. She went on to say that with regard to training of EMPS staff, it speaks to her about the need for more cross training and cross disciplines because EMPS is widely available state-wide and is an excellent source for families and kids, but we have a lot of disciplines who don't understand or know about it. Mary asked Jason what the content is and if there is a module on domestic violence for EMPS.

Jason Lange replied that there is a trauma module that includes some on domestic violence.

Amy Evison added that they have up to 10 or 11 core trainings that EMPS does, they are always looking to make adjustments and that it could be arranged.

Mary Painter stated that the other piece to this is how do we add these different, important training topics without adding burden to the workforce.

Amy Evison said that she brought some data about how much they are experiencing with kids in their general population around violence, and it's quite significant. She went on to say that the kids they are seeing are either victims of trauma in some way, exposed to violence through their peers and they are exposed to violence in their homes.

Garry Lapidus said that they mentioned the challenge of being on scene with a 911 family violence call and the challenge of making multiple phone calls, he asked if there was a way to stream line this to one call.

Sean Grant replied that one call to handle both issues would be helpful but that he cannot speak to the practicality of doing it, but that one place to go would be more effective for the officers and lead to more success for the program.

Karen Jarmoc indicated that she also liked the idea of one call if there could be some type of model, but that she does not like a call to DCF because victims may hesitate to call law enforcement if they know that DCF will get involved.

Karen O'Connor asked if EMPS is available regardless of whether or not you are participating in the REACT program.

Amy Evison replied yes.

Karen O'Connor asked where the six locations throughout the State of Connecticut are.

Amy Evison replied that you can receive EMPS where ever you live in Connecticut.

Karen O'Connor clarified that she meant as far as they are located state wide.

Amy Evison responded that if you dial 211 you will get the local EMPS provider where ever you live in Connecticut, so it is complete state-wide coverage.

Faith Voswinkel restated that anywhere people are they simply dial 211 if they state that this is an emergency regarding a child they jump to the head of the queue, some information is taken and then they are warm lined right to the provider. She commented that she's not sure how much more it can be streamlined. Faith then asked what the relationship with the schools is with the REACT program.

Sean Grant responded that they have their SRO supervisor involved in the process they also participate in programs where notifications are made prior to drug raids. He continued that they have satellite DCF workers in their police department which is a benefit to them. Sean indicated that he would like to be able to check a box and be able to send an email to the supervisor of the SRO unit so SROs would be notified the next day if something did happen the night before so the SRO would be able to watch that child the next day or the next day. He continued that he would like to incorporate more of the training they have had with EMPS and DCF so all are on the same page with the same training. Sean brought up that they have had a problem with the call center with small decision making things that they haven't been able to do.

Karen Jarmoc asked Jason to go back to the slide of agency locations and compared that to what Commissioner Schriro showed the task force in terms of volume of arrests. She noted that it's the eastern part of the state that has the highest volume, but when you look at the map up now, it is mostly around the centralized corridor and less so in the rural areas.

Nina Livingston said she would like to understand a better how they are collaborating in the field, is it just a call to EMPS and a handoff or whether there is actual collaboration on the scene, specifically around the interview of the child are the police waiting for EMPS to arrive before the child is interviewed in some or all cases, and are you collaborating regarding the need for DCF report.

Sean Grant replied that what they ask for response in the field is that if the scene is safe then the officer may not need to stay but if EMPS is going to be there they stay. He said that the DCF call does not have to be made there if arrangements can be made for the child at that time.

Nina Livingston said that if you have to interview the child as a witness are you waiting for EMPS. She commented that Amy was shaking her head. Nina then asked if EMPS is informing that question about a DCF report or are you two independently deciding whether or not to report, and there may be one report or two.

Sean Grant responded that was part of his comments that if they train together and determine who is going to be doing what.

Jason Lange added that what they are talking about is the gold standard of what he hopes they can work toward and that it is a dramatic shift for law enforcement to think about using EMPS and understand the child's perspective and the trauma. He said that he supports cross training and encouraging local collaboration because could be done without a lot of resources.

Jon Fontneau congratulated the City of Manchester for having such dedicated people working for their children. He went on to say that at one point Stamford had clinicians riding with police officers so they would be on the scene when the officer was on the scene, but that was discontinued because of lack of funds.

Karen Jarmoc asked Jon if there was anything formalized that he could send the task force about Stamford.

Jon Fontneau replied that he would like to bring up his child guidance center team from Stamford.

Karen Jarmoc commented that they will be worked into an upcoming meeting.

Amy Evison added that they do meet monthly where the adult crisis team and the child crisis folks come together to review where each are at with referrals and discuss what went well, what they can give feedback to the officer about the family and trouble shoot what they can do better.

Karen Jarmoc asked Jennifer Celentano if she would like to address the task force and give a brief outline of her work.

Jennifer Celentano gave brief comments.

Karen Jarmoc asked if it would be helpful if a specific recommendation could be developed and then work it out with Mary for the task force to consider.

Jennifer Celentano responded that would be OK, but she wondered if it would require a change from the Rule Committee because it is a Judicial Branch form.

Karen Jarmoc asked if Jennifer would mind doing the diligence around that.

Jennifer Celentano agreed to do the diligence.

Karen Jarmoc asked Jennifer if it was specific to family violence, because that is the task force's charge.

Jennifer Celentano responded that she doesn't think you can differentiate between them.

Karen Jarmoc commented that if Jennifer would confer with DCF and Judicial if there is a policy recommendation that the task force can consider and discuss as part of their report. Karen then asked Christine Rapillo if she would like to address the task force.

Christine Rapillo gave her comments.

Karen Jarmoc asked Christine to clarify the GAL training.

Christine Rapillo said that her office is new to the family court/child welfare procedure. She continued that the initial program which is six classes for the family court Guardian ad Litem did include some training on domestic violence and it has been incorporated into some of the trauma work. Christine said that for the Public Defender's office the training in October is the first specific domestic violence training that is geared toward child protection and the family court people. She went on to say that the six class training is in the process of being revised and that the GAL training hasn't been offered in two years and that domestic violence will definitely be part of the curriculum.

Karen Jarmoc asked who does the training, what is the curriculum, where do you get the curriculum and who is delivering that training and is it mandated.

Christine Rapillo replied that the specific training is not currently mandated. The Center for Children's Advocacy, which is affiliated with the University of Connecticut Law School does the pre-service training and there is a section on domestic violence. She went on to say that the Department of Children and Families also offers training.

Karen Jarmoc asked that Christine follow up with the Children's Law Center to understand what curriculum they are utilizing.

Christine Rapillo commented that with the training being revised that this is the perfect time to talk about it.

Garry Lapidus asked what is being taught now in law schools in this country on this issue.

Christine Rapillo replied that she does not know, but she can find out.

Karen Jarmoc said that the next meeting will be October 6th from 10:00 – 12:00.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 PM by Co-Chair Karen Jarmoc.

Video of the entire meeting can be accessed on [CT-N on demand](#).