

New York CAN
General Meeting
June 8, 2007
Notes

The meeting began with opening remarks by our guests followed by a question and answer period. The afternoon session was devoted to group discussions about New York CAN's legislative agenda, goals and future activities. In addition, participants were given operating guidelines for the coalition.

Guests: Olivia Golden, Director of State Operations, Executive Chamber
Commissioner Gladys Carrion, NYS Office of Children and Family Services
Commissioner David Hansell, NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

Key points from the morning:

Executive Chamber:

- Dr. Golden and Paul Frances, Budget Director, have begun meetings related to next year's budget. The Governor plans to issue his budget in November of this year.
- The Governor's priorities for the end of session include Campaign Finance Reform, Healthy Schools Act, Anti-Violence in video games, and Paid Family Leave.
- The Children's Cabinet will focus on two agenda items to begin its work: insuring all 400,000 children not covered by health insurance by the end of the 4 year term and improvements in early learning including universal PreK. The Cabinet's Chair, Olivia Golden, emphasized the need to begin with a goal that everyone wants to see accomplished. In addition, these two items have the needed funding in the budget.
- Director Golden stated her interest in learning more about Children's Budgets but acknowledged that she has reservations about logistics, mechanics, and how to use a budget to get to outcomes.

OCFS:

- Comm. Carrion will be working to assure that OCFS systems are pathways to opportunity.
- Improvements she has made to date include hiring a new deputy commissioner for juvenile justice, an Ombudsman with a staff of 10, reviving the Independent Review Board, and hiring 182 new staff for OCFS facilities including 32 Mental Health positions.
- She will be looking towards an integrated system of early care and learning with child care and PreK. She will focus on a Quality Rating System for child care.
- Comments were made on the difficulty in incorporating appropriate child and youth development into practice when dealing with crisis. Inroads have been made on the Child Welfare side of OCFS but have yet to be incorporated into the juvenile justice system.

OTDA:

- Comm. Hansell reported that he is reframing and expanding OTDA's mission in four specific areas:
 - 1) Enhancing economic security of families by improving their access to the supports available to them. Ex: VITA sites, Food Stamp Initiative, supporting DOH in expanding CHIP.
 - 2) Assisting with entry to the workforce given more difficult TANF requirements.
 - 3) Assisting those fragile/disabled populations to obtain support needed.

- 4) Enhancing child well-being and reducing child poverty with a focus on kin care families, non-custodial parents and child care needs.
- Convened a work group to look at ways to enhance their fatherhood initiatives, EITC, parenting skills efforts.
 - Pleased with the trafficking legislation passed this year.
 - Wants to follow-up on those who leave OTDA through wage reports.

Cross Systems Issues:

- The panel thought that many of the cross systems issues will be solved but need help in bringing those issues to their attention. OCFS staff are already meeting with SED staff to bring quality education into OCFS facilities and to foster care youth. This includes a workgroup with CUNY to assure opportunities exist for foster care youth.
- Regarding workforce issues, all agreed that their work starts with goals for children and families and that they struggle with the need. They need to support providers as they move to performance-based contracts and are looking at various means for providers to gain efficiencies, i.e. joint RFPs, joint reporting, etc.
- In Child Welfare the top issue is cross systems needs, especially in relationship to mental health needs. Referenced CCSI pilot in Rochester as an example from which to learn.
- Regarding New York's state supervised, locally administered system, they agreed that the difficulty is in finding the right balance between local control and equity. They are interested in learning about the different experiences across the state.
- Regarding poverty and housing: New York is unique because it has two different economies. Their approach needs to focus on two generations and they stated that parents "should not have to choose between the job they need and the child they love." Important to offer supports in the most effective way, connect people to jobs, offer effective education including an increased role for community colleges. The agencies who offer services have now begun communication with the bricks and mortar agencies with a goal of focusing more on non-profit housing and less on market rate housing. They have begun to look at the work being done in Philadelphia and Illinois as examples.

How can New York CAN support this work?

- Participation in OCFS work groups. Those interested should email Comm. Carrion.
- Advice and help in keeping the agencies focused on outcomes.
- They asked for our patience as they have to start somewhere. They asked that we tell them when they are wrong and also give them a sense of what they are doing that is right.
- There is a tremendous mutuality of goals with New York CAN. They asked for our help by giving them the information and data that will help frame the case and establish benchmarks.

They can be reached at:

Olivia Golden: Olivia.Golden@chamber.state.ny.us

Cc: Amy.Schner@chamber.state.ny.us

Gladys Carrion: Gladys.Carrion@OCFS.state.ny.us

David Hansell: David.Hansell@otda.state.ny.us