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## Call for Articles

This newsletter is one mechanism utilized to report out on key accomplishments and communicate upcoming tasks and due dates. If anyone has information to include for future editions, please e-mail Katie Bright ([kbright@pcgus.com](mailto:kbright@pcgus.com)) or one of our county newsletter representatives:

- **Allegheny:**  
Robin Orlando
- **Crawford:**  
Kelly Schwab
- **Dauphin:**  
Rick Vukmanic
- **Lackawanna:**  
Kerry Browning
- **Philadelphia:**  
Kimberly Ali
- **Venango:**  
Amie Wood-Wessel

Please send PCG representative Erin Palmer any county updates or changes in position/title and contact information for the various workgroups via e-mail: [epalmer@pcgus.com](mailto:epalmer@pcgus.com)

## Important Dates

- Semi-annual Progress Report templates have been sent to the counties and submissions are due to Katie Bright ([kbright@pcgus.com](mailto:kbright@pcgus.com)) by July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- Interim Report feedback to Mary Beth Rauktis ([mar104@pitt.edu](mailto:mar104@pitt.edu)) by May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016

## Evaluation Update from the CWRC

Data collection for the Evidence Based Practices (EBP) sub-study and Family Engagement sub-study remains underway and ongoing. The Evaluation Team continues to provide support by reaching out to counties as needed to deliver technical assistance in collecting and submitting data. If you have any questions about the EBP data collection process, please contact our EBP Evaluation Coordinator, Jenna Meister ([jem275@pitt.edu](mailto:jem275@pitt.edu)). For questions regarding family engagement data collection, please contact our Evaluation Specialist, Alexis Pigott ([alp159@pitt.edu](mailto:alp159@pitt.edu)).

The Evidence Based Practice Attitude Scale (EBPAS) survey was distributed on May 13, 2016 to Lackawanna, Philadelphia and Venango counties (distribution to Allegheny and Dauphin will shortly follow). Very similar to the Evidence Based Practice Questionnaire (EBPQ) that was sent out last year, this is an online survey that will be sent out to supervisor and casework staff, and will take about 10 minutes to complete. The survey will remain open for a 6 week period and all responses will be confidential.

Additional evaluation activities include the SPANS as well as the family engagement conference observations. These activities continue to occur on a rolling basis in addition to other evaluation activities that only occur once per year. If you have any questions regarding the evaluation activities please contact Evaluation Coordinator, Justin Donofrio ([jdd63@pitt.edu](mailto:jdd63@pitt.edu)).

Lastly, as mentioned during the PA Convening this month, minor revisions to the Interim Evaluation Report have been made on pages 59-63 (Tables 26-30). A new PDF version of the report, which includes the revisions, has been sent out to the participants of the PA Convening as well as the CWDP Steering Committee. Please contact the Evaluation Team if you have any questions.

## Pennsylvania Convening May 5-6, 2016

**Evaluation Team:** On May 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> 2016, the Casey Foundation sponsored a convening for designated representatives of the six counties participating in the PA CWDP IV-E Waiver. The purpose of the meeting was to explore progress to date; identify successes and challenges, and to think through next steps. This section of the newsletter will highlight the evaluation components. The convening was different from last year's in a significant aspect. This year there was information to share about data submitted by counties and analyses completed by the evaluation team. Time was devoted to clarification of results and reflection on some findings and challenges to date.

Mary Beth Rauktis (CWDP Principal Investigator) and Marlo Perry (Co-PI) provided an overview of the Interim Evaluation Report that was submitted to ACF at the end of February. They were joined by Britany Orlebeke and Laura Packard Tucker from Chapin Hall who analyzed data from the project. They all stressed the importance of timely, accurate data submissions. Counties were shown how Chapin Hall can use data to inform operational and policy decisions in each county. For instance, they are able to provide a look at history of admissions over time rather than a snapshot of a point in time. Some trends regarding common challenges and successes were shared. For example, each county has struggled to collect CANS, FAST, and ASQ data in the proposed sequence and timeline. All counties have experienced challenges with implementation of Evidence Based Practices. However, findings from the Family Engagement Study show relatively high levels of fidelity.

Mary Beth, Marlo, Britany and Laura held “office hours” during which they asked counties about particular patterns of data that they thought looked unusual. Counties were thoughtful in providing contextual information to the evaluators about policies and procedures, as well as circumstances, under which the data could be plausible. As a follow-up task, each county was asked to review the interim report to verify that their models have been described accurately by the evaluation team. Mary Beth has requested that counties get back to her with changes and to give feedback by **May 31<sup>st</sup> 2016**

**Fiscal Sessions:** Don Winstead and Gloria Gilligan led the fiscal sessions, consisting of a presentation on day one and a series of office hours on day two. In the presentation, they illustrated the cumulative nature of claims and savings under the waiver. Background was provided on the how the capped allocations and maintenance change factor were determined; the two allocations, admin. (50/50 FFP) and maintenance (FMAP), and how certain costs can be shifted between the two when claiming under the waiver; and the hierarchy of claiming. While the main session on transitioning out of the waiver was held on day two, Don spoke briefly on the Family First Act – stressing that the changes it proposes have not yet passed but could impact claiming after the waiver – and some of the proposed changes, specifically surrounding candidates. The office hours on day two provided each county the opportunity to see and ask questions about their claim history under the waiver. In addition to a snapshot of their claims against the administrative and maintenance caps, participants were provided with AFCARS data to illustrate changes in their counts from the end of the cap-setting period (2010) through 2015. Counties had the opportunity to provide additional context for some of these changes (e.g., an increase in sibling groups coming into care, drug use, reductions in permanency exits). IV-E penetration rates were also discussed for each county, showing the changes from the start of the waiver until Q2 of SFY 15/16. Beyond changes to the populations in care and IV-E penetration rates, other financial considerations, such as the expectation that provider rates will increase, were canvassed.

**Implementation:** Allison Metz, PhD and Leah Bartley, both of National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) led discussions regarding “Implementing Evidence Based Practices.” This includes a session with the full group on day one, in collaboration with the Child Development Institute of the University of North Carolina (UNC). Then the county-specific office hours on day two. These meetings were informative and allowed each county to discuss its local components that impacted how new/revamp practices were being delivered. Each county was able to work with NIRN to explore its resource network, organizational goals, local barriers, and anticipated plans moving forward. How each county implements the interventions to address its community needs will be vital to making the waiver demonstration projects impactful, and was heavily discussed during each meeting.

**Assessments:** One of the breakout sessions on day one was led by Robin Orlando (Allegheny CYF) and centered on the FAST and CANS. She discussed certain roadblocks and how they might be overcome. One hurdle is getting caseworkers to understand *why* the assessments are done; with many similarities between FAST/CANS and risk/safety assessments, it is important to remember that different types of assessments can capture different points of view (e.g., the professional lens of the caseworker or the family’s/child’s perspective). Participants in the breakout session shared their approaches. For example, Lackawanna County has

*“I found the convening very useful and especially meaningful for me as the designated person responsible for the implementation of EBP’s in my Community Umbrella Agency (CUA). It certainly expanded my understanding of the issues and challenges we face with its implementation. At the same time, I was also excited about its potential impact for changing a system that I have worked in for many years and frankly, needs to continue to change and evolve. Despite the many challenges noted, I walked away feeling positive and encouraged particularly around the “brainstorming” discussions for tweaking and modifying implementation to better serve clients and encourage and improve participation. I am also grateful that my CUA Director decided to include me in this event.”*

Feedback provided to the CWRC and shared with the permission of the survey respondent.

paired the assessment with FTC and Crawford encourages its workers to make a game of it, getting kids engaged so they will talk. Treating the assessments as a means of engaging the family was a major theme of the session. Robin advises staff to prepare and do some research prior to meeting with the family to allow for a natural conversation. Feedback from families indicates that families reflect more positively on the assessments when they are not conducted in a “checklist” fashion. Several tips and tools were made available to assist caseworkers in preparing for the assessments, overcoming uncomfortable conversations, and to assist supervisors in using the assessments to inform supervision

**Communications:** Patti-Jo Burnett spoke to the attendees on day one of the convening about branding, stressing that it is more than just logos and slogans. A main point in her initial talk was that “even if you don’t have a brand, you do,” that everyone who is made aware of the demonstration project can form their own perception of it and consistent messaging is the only way influence stakeholders’ perceptions. Even a descriptive name like “waiver demonstration project” would be a branding decision, in that it conveys certain ideas when dissected. Patti-Jo covered some of the main elements of branding and the importance of consistency. Tools like the Message Box were recommended to aid in allowing the flexibility to communicate with different audiences while maintaining the consistency and focus of the message.

While each participant county has its own variations, the main statewide message should be the starting point. A breakout session was held on day one, followed by county-specific office hours on day two. During the meetings on day two, Patti-Jo described the experiences she led with Lorain County Children’s Services (Ohio) in transitioning their agency’s brand and community awareness. The fiscal structure for her agency required a heavy county investment and the communications aspect of sharing her organization’s challenges and successes was key. After serving as the Public Relations Manager for over 20 years, her experiences were valuable in relating to how the PA counties would want to shape the community impression of their Title IV-E waiver demonstration projects.

***Thank you to all who participated!***

PCG is pleased to announce that the position formerly occupied by Bill Shutt has been filled.

Sandy Shedlock, who has been working with PCG and OCYF since 2014, will transition into her new role in June. Additional information will follow.