

**Foster Family-based Treatment Association
North Carolina Chapter Meeting
Friday, January 29, 2010
11:30am – 2:30pm
Burlington, NC**

Present: 27 Members; 16 Non-Members = 43 Total Attendees

Members: Aura Anania (ESUCP), Jim Barbee (WCHS), Dr. Laura Boyd (FFTA), Erica Carbonara (Methodist), Cynthia Chapman (Omni Visions), Michelle Corry (NYAP), Tom Culver (Kids Peace), Courtney Dabney (Children's Home Society), Jennifer Evans (WCHS), Turkessia Evans (Barium Springs), Tara Fields (CFSA-NC), Jean Kenefick (ESUCP), Ted Lane (Cardinal Clinic), Tara McMinn (Alexander), Karen McLeod (CFSA-NC), Kim Morgan (The Children's Home), Marc Murphy (Barium Springs), Maureen Murray (Duke), Ellen Scarborough (Methodist), Jenny Simmons (Eliada), Debi Stephenson (Bair), Phyllis Stephenson (ESUCP), Cindy Thomas (ESUCP), Alex Umstead (Youth Focus), Beth Waterson (Youth Focus); Call-ins: Gina Tipton (Tipton), Melissa Cole (FFTA)

Non-Members: Dee Etheridge (Johnson County DSS), Dennis Greer (Free Will Baptist), Brenden Hargett (Guilford County DSS), Eliza Harrell (Free Will Baptist), Bill Harrington (Consultant), Kim Johnson (Rainbow), Alvina McCallop (Consultant), Michelle Maynard (CSS), Jacqueline Messick (Triad Treatment Homes), Marcia Moore (Triad Treatment Homes), Matthew Murphy (Children's Advocacy Network), Paul Roodhuyzen (Triumph), Kerri Shiflett (Caring Family Network), Mary Walker (Families Together), Latasha Ward (Free Will Baptist), Marci White (NC Mentor)

11:38am Begin FFTA NC Chapter Meeting

Welcome and Introductions – Chair, Phyllis Stephenson, started the meeting at 11:38am. Noted growth in meeting attendance. Each member introduced him/herself. Sign-in sheets were passed around for signatures: 1 for members; 1 for non-members. Membership role was available for clarification.

FFTA NC Chapter Minutes November 2009/Introduction of 2010 Chapter officers –

- Chapter Board Introduced: Chair - Phyllis Stephenson; Vice-Chair - Leslie Kellenberger; Treasurer - Jean Kenefick; Secretary - Jenny Simmons; outgoing Secretary, Michelle Corry, recognized.
- November 2009 Meeting Minutes: Non-member agencies may attend 2 meetings per year. By the 3rd meeting, attendees need to join FFTA. Secretary will be tracking non-membership attendance. Will have a membership meeting at the end of our next meeting for approximately 30 minutes– to address membership and monies collected. No other business noted.

Guest Speaker: Laura Boyd/FFTA National Public Policy -

(Phyllis S. noted need to take chapter photograph.) Introduction of Dr. Laura Boyd – FFTA Public Policy and Government Relations Consultant; Dr. Boyd spends 1 week per month in Washington DC.

- Update on Federal Therapeutic Foster Care Agenda (Handout)
 1. Health Care – Washington DC: Described political atmosphere in Washington, DC. as generally tired and depressed. Presented that if the current Health Care bill passes as it is, it will continue to be worked on and defined. For example, with regard to definition of a benefits package and parity within mental health. Best estimate at this time is that by February 12, 2010 will likely have a package of 3 or 4 scaled down bills that begin in the House, passed by the House, and a Reconciliation bill addressing appropriations and fiscal pieces of Health Care. “Common wisdom” is that current Senate bill will not pass.
 2. TFC within Health Care – succeeded in getting “construction and definition language” in the House Health Care bill; got the same “construction and definition language” in HR 3590 Senate bill. Ideally, these would have gone to Reconciliation and gone on to the President to sign. In December 2009 - Dr. Boyd was getting Senators to sign a letter to leadership for Senate to accept the House language– 1/3 of caucus signed on including Senator Hagan. Where are we now? Probably no TFC in any Reconciliation bill which Dr. Boyd noted as okay due to Reconciliation bill focusing on fiscal issues. Dr. Boyd now to work on getting TFC into substantive bills on Health Care.
 3. Senate bill 1217 – filed June 2009 in the Senate – will likely file the House companion bill to this Senate bill before February 12th – this will have a definition of TFC for Medicaid purposes. Medicaid has been paying for TFC, but TFC has never been defined by Medicaid. This definition will:
 - a. Create a new medical assistance category under Medicaid for TFC which will allow states to bill directly to Medicaid for TFC services. CMS wants accountability and transparency – direct billing helps this.
 - b. States could choose to continue to bill for TFC as currently billing – through rehabilitation monies for behavioral health services that TFC delivers. This is permissive language.
 - c. State may use any reasonable method of payment – bundle or unbundle/day rate or case rate or fee for service. Again, permissive language.
 - d. Includes both rehabilitation and habilitation. TFC services not only include bringing a child up to his/her optimum level of function, but also maintaining at that level of functioning.
 - e. A child may have more than 1 case manager.
- Discussed fiscal issues and implications of this bill on other rehabilitation services. Dr. Boyd noted that the Senate authors of this bill are only interested in TFC. State Plan Amendment (SPA) defines who is covered under TFC service.

- Clarification requested: There is one bill – Senate bill 1217 with companion bill in the House to be introduced. Health Care – “construction and definition language” was submitted as an amendment to health care legislation in the House and Senate and did make it through.
- Clarification requested on “bundled” vs. “unbundled” – approximately 26 states pay for TFC as a “bundled” daily rate - in most states this covers behavioral health services, crisis intervention, and depending on your state’s SPA – case management. This does not include Room and Board – R&B comes from a different funding stream – IV-E. “Unbundled” – bill per service; adds an administrative function of detailing services provided in 15-minute increments.
- Having a TFC definition will define TFC in statute instead of being susceptible to change by different Presidential Administrations. Stressed importance of contacting your representatives. Use email correspondence sent out by FFTA.
- There is now an active relationship between FFTA and CMS. Dr. Boyd met with 5 directors of the 6 divisions of CMS on November 3, 2009. Dr. Boyd helped them understand - bundling vs. unbundling and that they do not pay for Room and Board. The director who was not present decides bundled vs. unbundled rate. Dr. Boyd to meet with this director next Wednesday, February 3rd. It was discussed that this meeting occurred likely because Dr. Boyd repeatedly asked for the meeting.
- In Obama Administration, CMS rescinded the rehabilitation rule, not requiring unbundling, not requiring 15-minute service increments – but, regional offices are not implementing. Dr. Boyd plans to ask CMS to get regional offices on board - that it is okay to bundle, that it is okay to not require 15-minute service increments. Atlanta office – which is North Carolina’s regional office is at this time actively trying to get services unbundled.
- It was noted that Senator Hagan was invited to today’s meeting.
- Services paid for are defined in each state’s SPA and this varies across states. Karen McLeod offered an update on the status of the Therapeutic Family Services’ SPA in North Carolina: Draft SPA submitted before the last FFTA meeting was submitted without a rate structure. With no response to this draft for 6 months, North Carolina was getting ready to submit the formal SPA with an increased rate before Christmas. At the end of December, Karen McLeod asked NC to hold off on re-submitting to Atlanta – until FFTA has more conversations with CMS – NC held it back. Last week, it was recommended that NC submit the formal SPA and it has now been sent. The hope is that Dr. Boyd’s work will change the direction of CMS and that the Atlanta regional office will respond to this change.

- In North Carolina, our state administration does not support unbundling. The states who are unbundling have state officials who support unbundling.
- Discussed balancing the timeframe of Dr. Boyd meeting with CMS, CMS to hopefully speak to regional offices while knowing that NC's formal SPA has been submitted. Senator Hagan has stated that she will contact CMS on our behalf. Will request this assistance when it makes sense to do so.
- Question posed - What does bundled rate in NC cover? 24/7 care, supervision for a child in TFC, skill set of foster parents, getting children to needed services, medication. It does not include Room and Board. It was noted that the current rate does not cover requirements of the service.
- Clarification of New Therapeutic Family Services definition vs. current TFC requirements: primarily new professional oversight requirements – Master's level supervisor and workers with QP status. Discussed documenting services provided in 15-minute increments. CMS' 8-minute rule was noted – if services are provided in at least 8-minutes, it can count as a 15-minute service.
- “Marching Orders” from Dr. Boyd:
 1. Email Senator Hagan through her staff, Michelle Adams (michelle_adams@hagan.senate.gov) – thank her for signing Stabeno support letter 12/24/2009 requesting adoption of therapeutic foster care language; introduce self, agency, population served, number of homes
 2. When the House bill is introduced, support this bill
 3. CMS – FFTA will keep us informed of what is occurring on this level
 4. NC Legislature – starts again in May; find out your local representative from www.ncga.state.nc.us- send email to introduce self as a service provider and a constituent, offer to be a resource; wish a successful session starting in May. Send in March or April. This is to start a relationship.
 5. Invite someone from a state administrative office to an FFTA meeting.
 6. Attend Public Policy Institute in May.
- If chapter members contact Senator Hagan, let the Phyllis know so that information can be presented at the Public Policy Institute.
- FFTA is now being seen as the voice of therapeutic foster care on Capitol Hill.

Updates from Karen McLeod -

CFSA-NC Karen McLeod: Children and Family Services; 54 member agencies.

- Licensure – Black Mountain office is down 3 staff and one position is frozen. Licenses are sent out once a month. CFSA proposed that they send licenses electronically, but the state does not have the technology for this now. Numerous

agencies are submitting to become child placing agencies – this process is slow. CFSA to lobby to have state hire needed staff in the Black Mountain office.

- Implementation Update #67: New Revised shortened version of PCP is out.
- Legislative Updates: 1) Political Climate - Currently, the state house and senate are democrat majority; poor economy, state unemployment his 11% - therefore, could see a swing to republican majority in the elections this year. Democrat majority issued a 1.5 billion dollar cut – a party that historically favors DHHS. The concern: what will happen when the republican party is in the majority. The state is currently using federal stimulus dollars to stay afloat, this money is running out. There are more cuts coming. No guarantee of more federal stimulus dollars.
NC is second lowest deficit state in the nation (3% while other states are around 20%). NC is pressing for tax reform, but chance of such substantive change is slim.
- Reported increase in TFC with closure of Level III and IV. CFSA is watching utilization rates at Value Options and are not seeing this reported increase in TFC. They are seeing reunification of kids to their families in Level III and Level IV, disrupting and coming back into care at Level III or PRTF.
- CABHA: agencies not becoming a CABHA need to connect with those who are going to become a CABHA in order to get referrals to stay in business. CFSA has started a CABHA committee. In March, will introduce a non-CABHA. The state has not figured out logistics of CABHA implementation and is open to recommendations. Transfer of endorsement is an issue. CFSA as put together a list of recommendations to make to the state. CFSA is working with consulting agency outside of Charlotte to work with agencies to facilitate conversations between CABHA and non-CABHA agencies to ensure continuation of services. CFSA is concerned about continuation of services in rural communities. July 1, 2010 is the start date for CABHA, will likely continue to be the start date with some flexibility. CFSA has a list of agencies within CFSA that plan to be CABHA. Can distribute this list.
- 2 LMEs – Eastpoint and Durham will have utilization review/utilization management transferred over to them from VO with a new IT system and no appeals. 2 LMEs are going to go under waiver.
- Case management SPA has been sent, but do not know when it will be approved. Case management is a bundled rate, but has not yet been approved by CMS.
- TFS SPA has been sent – there are 15 SPAs to review before TFS, top priority is case management.

Updates from Melissa Cole/National FFTA -

- 8th Annual Public Policy Institute & Advocacy Day - 5/3/2010 & 5/4/2010 in Washington, DC –1st day is training and panel discussions; 2nd day Capitol Hill
- FFTA Annual Conference – Nashville, TN 8/1/2010-8/4/2010
- Phyllis Stephenson – elected to National FFTA Board of Directors – started January 2010. Phyllis joins Frank Crawford from North Carolina.
- FFTA is looking for folks to serve on National Committees. Need folks to specifically join Membership, Editorial, Fund Development Committees.
- 2 Projects for 2010: 1) Practice/Model Guide – a catalogue of practices being utilized in foster care – not necessarily evidence-based, but practices that are being used across the United States. Will include an overview of the models and their outcomes. Will be issuing a call for model information from agencies. 2) Public Policy Guide – child welfare survival guide to focus on working within system changes. It will include performance-based contracting; bundling vs. unbundling; levels of care; privatization; step-down; reduction in congregate care. Will be looking for chapter support.
- Benchmarking Project- FFTA’s project has now ended; final reports will be made to members. For members who are interested in continuing to benchmark, there is a project with Alliance for Children and Families. Discount to FFTA members – thru the end of February 2010. Contact Melissa Cole, if you are interested in finding out more and getting connected with this project.
- Foster Parent College – online training for foster parents. Discount rate for FFTA members. Curriculum is research based.

Melissa Cole can be reached at (800) 414-3382 ext. 113 OR mcole@ffta.org.

Wrap Up and Next Meeting:

- Training Opportunities: NC Evidence Based Practice Center & Southern Regional AHEC in Fayetteville, NC– increase training to TFC agencies - 2/17/2010 a training on substance abuse in TFC; 2/25/2010 ADHD in TFC; hope to add more trainings throughout the state to ensure that agencies are equipped to serve increased acuity of children served in TFC.
- CFSA-NC membership benefit information available. Can contact Leslie K.
- FFTA membership packets are available - Let Jenny S. , Phyllis S. , or Leslie K. know and one can be sent to you.
- NC FFTA Chapter Meeting Frequency – every two months; some members asked through email to not meet on Fridays; however no one present spoke to this issue when asked. Next meeting set for Friday, March 26, 2010 11:30am – 2:30pm. Agenda for March: Karen McLeod with updates including CABHA update; Phyllis FFTA National Board updates with goals; Public Policy – discuss a plan to best represent NC Chapter in Washington, DC; idea of a packet to take by NC Chapter members – Phyllis to talk with Dr. Boyd about this idea; Bob Hensley or

Kevin Kelley to call in to talk about new licensing packet pilot project; business meeting for final 30 minutes

- NC FFTA Chapter Committees – Membership Committee – co-chairs: Leslie Kellenberger and Jean Kenefick; Programs & Meetings Committee; Public Relations Committee. Looking for folks to serve on these committees and/or co-chair.
- Email concerns, training topics to Phyllis S.

Meeting adjourned 2:35pm

Minutes submitted by Jenny Simmons, FFTA NC Chapter Secretary