



Oregon

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**Report to Interim Committees of the Legislative Assembly
Related to Human Services
HB 2233 Advisory Committee Recommendations
Related to Residential Care for Children, Youth or Youth Offenders**

August 22, 2016

House Bill 2233, enacted in the 2015 Regular Legislative Session, established an advisory committee within the Office of Adult Abuse Prevention & Investigations (OAAPI) that provides services to several programs of the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) that serve:

- Adults over the age of 65;
- Adults with physical disabilities;
- Adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities;
- Adults with mental illness; and
- Children receiving residential/therapeutic services.

The purpose of the advisory committee was to advise the Department and OAAPI with respect to residential care for children, youth or youth offenders that are subject to the oversight and administration of OAAPI.

HB 2233 required the submission of a report to the interim legislative committees on the advice and recommendations provided by the advisory committee, including: (a) the need to adopt new or amend existing administrative rules; (b) the status of existing processes to investigate residential care and the need to improve or expand such processes; (c) the current processes for making findings of abuse or neglect in residential care; (d) strategies for ensuring the safety of children, youth or youth offenders in residential care. Please note in the Legislative Report submitted December, 2015 we met required sections (b) and (c). This report will complete our work meeting sections (a) and (d).

HB 2233 Advisory Committee Members

Staff:

Angela Allbee, DHS Legislative Coordinator

Nelsa Brodie, DHS, OAAPI Project Manager

Veronica Garcia, Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs, HB 2233 Support

Appointed Committee Members:

Marie Cervantes, Director, Office of Adult Abuse Prevention and Investigations
John Thompson, Deputy Director, Office of Adult Abuse Prevention and Investigations
Michelle Morman, Investigator, Office of Adult Abuse Prevention and Investigations
Debbi Kraus-Dorn, DHS Office of Developmental Disability Services
Harry Gilmore, DHS Office of Licensing and Regulatory Oversight
Laurie Price, DHS Child Welfare
Kris Scrabeck, Oregon Youth Authority
Janet Arenz, Director, Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs
Leslie Sutton, Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities
Bob Joondeph, Disability Rights of Oregon
Francis Maher, St. Mary's School for Boys
Peter Rosenblatt, Albertina Kerr
Robin Donart, Maplestar

Additional key attendees:

Chris Shank, Disability Rights Oregon
Kevin George, DHS Child Welfare
Khris Ward, Oregon Youth Authority
Bruce Baker, DHS Office of Developmental Disability Services
Frank Miles, DHS Background Check Unit
Kelly Myrick-Duckett, DHS Background Check Unit

Advisory Committee Meetings

Four meetings were held in 2016: March 21, 2016; April 27, 2016; June 27, 2016 and July 27, 2016. In addition to these meetings, an education subcommittee was formed and met on June 15, 2016. The frequency of meetings allowed the committee to develop a clearer understanding of system-based issues affecting children, youth, and youth offenders in residential care, as well as an opportunity to develop key recommendations for this report.

Key Findings

1. A number of gaps were identified by Advisory Committee members:
 - (a) Sharing of Abuse Information: a gap was identified related to access to abuse information between school districts, the Teachers, Standards, and Practice Commission (TSPC), and DHS. Currently, there is no central database or authority for these entities to share relevant abuse data.
 - (b) Reference Checks: a gap was identified regarding reference checks between school districts and Child Caring Agencies (CCAs). Currently, personnel have the potential to move between school systems and CCAs without employers being aware of abuse investigations. Additionally, CCAs are reporting that they are not able to openly communicate concerns with one-another during a reference check for fear of being sued. This can potentially result in questionable staff moving from one program to another despite work or safety concerns.

2. Streamlining and standardizing incident reports will greatly enhance the ability to track trends and other vital pieces of information for abuse prevention strategies, to make policy recommendations, and play an instrumental role in screening determinations. Incident reports are critical in capturing the events that transpired and they are used by the Office of Licensing and Regulatory Oversight (OLRO), OAAPI, and Child Welfare.
3. This committee has been central in reporting on policy, procedure, and data. The work of the Advisory Committee has significantly increased awareness around roles, responsibilities, hiring practices, training and certification, and the general scope of responsibility for members. This includes sharing vital information, including data from all disciplines. As a result, members are committed to continuing improving the work they do that will strengthen the support network where youth thrive and do well.
4. The inclusion of state entities and provider organizations has proven to be effective in identifying ways to strengthen system practices and communication. The committee wishes to re-purpose in order to create an informal group of members that will continue to collaborate, strategize and work together to identify and find solutions to close gaps in the system and improve services for children, youth, and youth offenders in residential care. Additionally, with the implementation of SB1515 there are new opportunities for identifying and evaluating impacts; as well as identifying desired outcomes and developing targets for child safety and system improvements. These partnerships are valued and moving forward in a unified manner will greatly benefit the youth we respectfully serve.

Recommendations:

The HB 2233 Advisory Committee agreed to the following recommendations:

1. Establish a pilot project: an education sub-committee has been established with Teachers, Standards, and Practice Commission (TSPC), Oregon Department of Education (ODE), Salem-Keizer School District (SKSD), and the Department of Human Services (DHS). Discussions are taking place to create a pilot project to address the gaps that exist in the sharing of important abuse information.
2. Continue discussions related to sharing reference check information between schools districts and CCA providers, as well as the CCAs ability to share information with each other during reference checks.
3. Review best practices to develop an incident report that can best serve the needs of providers and DHS and enable the capturing of important abuse prevention data.
4. Continue to analyze data, trends and information, research, and share best practices as a collective group.
5. Identify outcome targets and evaluation metrics for impacts on child safety, as well as system impacts and improvements.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this final report related to residential care for children, youth, or youth offenders. The advisory committee members have a shared commitment to the children we serve and it is our goal to work together to make changes that result in positive benefits.

Please contact Marie Cervantes at (503) 945-9491 or Marie.G.Cervantes@state.or.us if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

Marie Cervantes, Director
Office of Adult Abuse Prevention and Investigations
A shared service of DHS and OHA