DFPS Rider 25 Report for Foster Care Redesign
February 2016

As required in Sections 25 (a) and (b) of Rider 25 (page II-41) in Article II of The General Appropriations Act, 84th Texas Legislature, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) shall, on August 1st and February 1st of each year of the biennium, "Report selected performance measures identified by the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) that will allow for comparative analysis between the legacy foster care and redesigned foster care systems". Additionally DFPS shall, "Provide a report that contains the most recent data for the selected comparative performance measures, an analysis of the data that identifies trends and impact occurring in the redesigned foster care system, identification and analysis of factors negatively impacting any outcomes, recommendations to address problems identified from the data, and any other information necessary to determine the status of the redesigned foster care system". To meet these requirements DFPS is using a report format specified by the LBB which is now attached as a spreadsheet. This narrative discusses trends, impact, analyses of the factors that affect the outcomes, and recommendations to address problems that have been identified, if any.

Background

The goal of Foster Care Redesign (FCR) is to improve outcomes for children and families by creating sustainable placement resources in communities that will meet the service needs of children and youth in foster care, using the least restrictive placement settings.

The redesign changes the way DFPS procures, contracts, and pays for foster care services. Under FCR, a single contractor provides a full continuum of services to children and families within a designated geographic area. In Stage I, this Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) is responsible for finding foster homes or other living arrangements for children in state care and providing them services to meet identified needs. In Stage II, the SSCC expands services to include planning, coordination, and delivery of services to the families of children and youth in paid foster care. The SSCC is competitively procured and the contract is performance-based with financial incentives and disincentives for permanency outcomes, and additional performance measures for child safety and well-being. Stage III activates incentive payments. The contract is "no eject, no reject" and the SSCC must take custody of children within four hours of referral.

DFPS fully executed a contract with Providence Services Corporation of Texas (PSC) to serve as the initial Single Source Continuum Contract for DFPS Region 2/9 on February 1, 2013. PSC did not accept its first referral to place a child until August 26, 2013. On August 1, 2014, PSC provided formal notice to the department of its intent to terminate services provided under the SSCC contract in Region 2/9. The

department had been working with PSC to address performance concerns and therefore accepted the notice of termination. This report does not contain performance data for PSC for this reason.

DFPS executed the second SSCC contract with ACH Child and Family Services (ACH) on January 1, 2014 for DFPS Region 3b. This SSCC catchment area includes Tarrant, Erath, Hood, Johnson, Palo Pinto, Parker, and Somervell counties in DFPS Region 3. The Region 3b SSCC under ACH Our Community Our Kids (OCOK) accepted its first referral for new and subsequent placements on September 1, 2014. On April 1, 2015, DFPS and the SSCC completed the transition of the legacy children in Region 3b. As of February 2016, OCOK had 1,326 children in the SSCC continuum which represents 97 percent of the children/youth in paid foster care from 3b, and approximately 8 percent of the overall children and young adults in paid foster care in Texas. The OCOK network consists of 99 service providers.

Limitations for the Rider 25 Report

As noted in previous Rider 29 Reports, the SSCC 3b percentages for some of the LBB measures appear significantly different from the Region 3b, Legacy 3b, and statewide percentages. This remains true for the current report. Some differences in performance measure results can be attributed to both the number of clients placed with the 3b SSCC (a small percentage of children from the legacy system that were subsequently placed with the SSCC over time), when those clients were placed (some children had longer service experiences with the SSCC than others more quickly exiting care), and the small number of children who remained in the legacy system in 3b. For example, in Section A, the percentage of children "conserved to majority" (children in DFPS' conservatorship who exit to adulthood) for the 3b SSCC is comparatively high in fiscal year 2015 at 33 percent, but the underlying numbers as found in Appendix A are 4 out of a total of 12 children. Legacy 3b measures in fiscal year 2015 and fiscal year 2016 are based on the few children placed in homes and facilities that did not transfer to the SSCC.

Additionally, there are limitations to data collection and coding. For example, DFPS identifies sibling groups by common case number with no mechanism for producing aggregate data that captures relationships where case numbers are not the same. OCOK identifies sibling groups based on documented relationships. Future interoperability of systems will help improve data collection and reporting. DFPS continues to refine data methodologies to support the best measurement of outcomes and anticipates that measures may be refined in future reports.

Finally, child outcome measurement requires time. Not until an SSCC has served all catchment area children in paid foster care for a sufficient amount of time will the data clearly reflect performance. Chapin Hall data and performance experts define "sufficient" time as a minimum of two years of full implementation with additional time required to collect data on those children and families' experience and outcomes from entry to exit.

Evaluation of Foster Care Redesign

Evaluation of FCR is on-going to support Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and includes both process and outcome components. DFPS and the Public Provider Partnership (PPP) that serves as the

guiding body for FCR defined the key elements to be evaluated. Process and evaluation findings help determine whether these elements are being implemented with fidelity to the model and are yielding the desired outcomes. The process evaluation plan (found in the Foster Care Redesign Implementation Plan) includes an assessment of the development, implementation, and delivery of catchment area services including the SSCC infrastructure. Outcome evaluation includes both contract performance and system change. DFPS continues to work with Chapin Hall of the University of Chicago to provide an independent data analysis of each SSCC's performance on paid care days which will become the basis for incentive payments in stage III. DFPS uses evaluation findings to assist in identifying performance, trends, changes, and any problems and issues in the redesign catchment areas.

Process Component

The 84th Legislature supported implementation of FCR into one additional catchment area over fiscal years 2016-2017. The Legislature approved increases to some of the residential foster care rates which subsequently raised the blended foster care rate in catchment 3b. In addition, funds were appropriated to support fringe and benefits associated with the resource transfer, FCR Network Support Funding at $1,200 per child FTE, start-up funding for the new catchment area as well as approval to hire a performance and evaluation lead.

In April 2015, in accordance with the recommendations of the Sunset Committee, DFPS published an initial Implementation Plan for Foster Care Redesign (to be updated regularly as needed). As a part of the implementation, DFPS considers the following criteria in determining selection of the next catchment area:

- Minimum of 500 new entries of children per year
- Proximity to existing catchment area
- Local community support
- Regional readiness and stability
- Placements in and out of catchment area
- Challenges with capacity
- Affordability

DFPS has announced DFPS Region 2 (Abilene) as the next catchment area for implementation of FCR. A Request for Proposal is currently in the final stages of approval. Information obtained through the on-going evaluation of FCR was used to inform further improvements to the procurement and will inform implementation processes in the next catchment area.

Areas of focus for continuous quality improvements include resource transfer, data, and information technology.

Area of Focus	Current Challenges	Identified Solutions
Resource Transfer	• Resources have transferred based on transfer of entire function (i.e. placement staff, foster/adopt, contracts staff)	Short Term: • Mapping of roles and responsibilities • Focus groups (both in and

Area of Focus	Current Challenges	Identified Solutions
	but does not account for staff specific transfer of function • SSCC has responsibility for some tasks for which no transfer of resources has occurred, this will especially be true in Stage II of Implementation	outside of catchment area) • Define methodology for resource transfer based on actual task distribution Long Term: • Use results of time study both in and out of catchment areas • Cost Reports
Data	• Reconciling numbers and data definitions across multiple systems • Disentangling SSCC performance from the performance of the legacy system during the time of transition • Point-in-time measures complicate CQI process • Lag in Data Entry • Accuracy of data entry	• Development of a data dictionary (defines key terms to the coding level) • Continue to refine "admissions" cohort (all children removed after implementation) versus legacy component (children in paid foster care prior to implementation.) • Address lag in entry through improved tracking, training and IT system changes • Recalibration of some measures- adds some non-Point in time measures to more directly measure SSCC specific activities. • Data reconciliation processes •
Information Technology Compatibility	• Federal SACWIS rules did not support interoperability of systems without human intervention • IMPACT entry requires SSCC manual data entry of information, which results in duplication of effort and time lag • Technology and process changes needed to authorize and make timely payments to the SSCC for purchased services provided for families in Stage 2. Involves some changes to service codes to enable more flexibility under a performance-based contract.	• Federal SACWIS rule changes to support interoperability • Bi-monthly meetings to explore best manner to proceed with building interoperable systems • Internal work with Budget and IT to identify and implement automated billing solution. SSCC to produce reports on service utilization.

Outcome Component

OCOK began offering SSCC services in the 3b catchment area in September 2014. Some of the key responsibilities of the SSCC include:

- Taking physical custody of children within four hours of referral
- Placing children within Region 3b to the greatest extent possible
- No eject/no reject of all referrals received

Although sufficient outcome data is not expected until an SSCC has been in operation for at least two years, systems-level results may be seen earlier. As described in the FCR logic model, results that would indicate that FCR is working include:

- Appropriate services provided in locations needed
- Creative/innovative service provision and/or expansion in type and number of available services
- Improvement in quality of care
- Increased foster care capacity in catchment area
- No children supervised temporarily by CPS in offices due to lack of placement.

By the end of the first quarter of fiscal year 2016 in its second year of operation, OCOK has demonstrated:

System Improvement	Description
Increased placement capacity	- Increased licensed foster family home bed capacity by 33% (over 500 beds)[i] - Improved rural capacity (140% increase in foster family homes in Palo Pinto County)[ii] - Expansion of therapeutic foster care - No children supervised in CPS settings overnight
Implemented the Every Child A Priority (ECAP) placement matching system	OCOK uses decision-support software to ensure a child's first placement is the best placement. ECAP ranks potential placements for a child according to a research-based algorithm that is designed to support placing children closer to home and with their siblings.
Activated disruption mitigation system to help proactively preserve placements	Best practice Disruption Mitigation Guidelines were developed by the OCOK Network Clinical Committee in consultation with a number of providers who have systems to reduce the number of disruptions occurring in their families. OCOK providers are required to have a formal system in their policies that contain the elements of these guidelines and are required to demonstrate that they are implementing practices consistent with their policies.
Implemented the Quality Parenting Initiative	The Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) is one of the OCOK approaches to strengthening the quality of care provided to children and youth living in foster care. The goal of QPI is to develop a systematic approach to recruiting and retraining high-quality caregivers in our community. This initiative has proven to be effective in improving the quality of care for children in foster care by redefining the

System Improvement	Description
	expectations and roles of caregivers and child welfare system in excellent parenting.
Implemented network information exchange	The Provider Information Exchange (PIX), developed by Five Points, Inc. combines different data sources in one seamless process that uniquely identify resources and children in care, integrated with state systems.
Implemented the Child and Adolescent Needs Survey (CANS)	OCOK uses the CANS assessment to gather standardized clinical information on children to inform service plans, support placement decisions, and eventually to track clinical progress. The CANS is administered for every child over age 5 entering care and every 90 days for children in treatment settings. The test is administered by a trained person who knows the child and is the responsibility of the placing agency to administer.
Completed comprehensive safety audits in100% of the OCOK network child placing agencies	Praesidium, Inc., the largest child abuse risk management company in the United States, offers an online training tool to help providers implement research-proven abuse prevention strategies. Child-placing agencies in the ACH Child and Family Services/Our Community Our Kids (OCOK) network took thorough safety reviews required annually to assess how their policies and practices stacked up against nationally recognized standards and received consultation to improve their practices and scores. In 2016, OCOK providers are completing Peer to Peer Abuse Risk Mitigation training developed by Praesidium.

Resulting positive outcomes for fiscal year 2015 and first quarter 2016 include:

Outcome	Description
Child safety	99.97% of placements in fiscal year 2015 and 100% for quarter one fiscal year 2016 provided safety for children[iii]
Increased placement in least restrictive foster home settings	76.6% of children entering paid care under the SSCC (new admissions)[iv] compared to 71.4% for all children statewide for fiscal year 2015[v]. OCOK's focus on stepping children and youth down form residential treatment stays resulted in 32 children successfully transitioned in fiscal year 2015 with only 2 youth returning to residential treatment, and 2 transitioning from residential treatment to an adoptive home.[vi]
Improved placement proximity	Placement within 50 miles of home of removal (82.7% for new admissions in fiscal year 2015 and 70.2% for all children served by the SSCC including those already in a paid care prior to the start date compared to 61.5% statewide) [vii]
Improved placement stability	Two or fewer placement moves while in paid foster care (94% for new admissions in the first quarter of fiscal year 2016 compared to 89% 3b baseline for the two year measure[viii] (The number of placement moves will increase with time.)

Note: DFPS and Chapin Hall are tracking data that isolates new admissions to the SSCC from children who transferred to the SSCC from the legacy system. The SSCC has been solely responsible for decisions that impact outcomes for the new admissions.

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[i] DFPS CLASS Data Warehouse and IMPACT Data Warehouse, Report Number: sscc_02slx.asp
[ii] DFPS CLASS Data Warehouse and IMPACT Data Warehouse, Report Number: sscc_02slx.asp
[iii] DFPS Management Reporting and Statistics Rider 25 Report
[iv] DFPS Management Reporting and Statistics
[v] DFPS Management Reporting and Statistics Rider 25 Report
[vi] "Foster Care Redesign Is Working" publication of Our Community Our Kids a division of ACH Child and Family Services
[vii] Fiscal Year 2015 Foster Care Redesign Data Report prepared by Kempe Center, 2015.
[viii] Region 3b Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Texas Foster Care Redesign Report, One Year Report prepared by Chapin Hall at the university of Chicago, 2016.