

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for
Systems of Care



Using Policy to Initiate Change
in Systems of Care Communities



Presenters

- Gary De Carolis, Senior Consultant, National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care
- Matthew Shuman, MSW, ICF International

Welcome

- Thank you for your interest in this webinar. Our telephone lines are maxed at 125 participants. We apologize if you are not able to access the audio portion of the webinar.
- The webinar will be recorded and transcribed. These will be made available on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website (www.childwelfare.gov).

Learning Objectives

- To better understand the policy options available to those working in child welfare, including systems of care
- To learn how to use the Systems of Care Policy Action Guide on the Information Gateway website

Key Questions

- Participants will explore the following:
 - What are the policy options available to me?
 - How will the Policy Action Guide help me decide what kind of policy option is best for my organization or system?
 - How do you organize to develop a policy?

Systems of Care Principles

- Child, youth, and family involvement/partnership
- Cultural and linguistic competence
- Home and community based
- Individualized and strength-based care
- Interagency and intra-agency collaboration
- Accountability

Systems of Care Infrastructure Components

- Planning
- Governance
- System management
- Coordination of services and service array
- Communication
- **Policy**
- Finance
- Continuous quality improvement
- Training, development, and human resources

Webinar Agenda

- Policy definition
- Key partners
- Pre-planning phase (activities/wisdom shared)*
- Planning phase (activities/wisdom shared)*
- Implementation phase (activities/wisdom shared)*
- Continuous quality improvement phase (activities)*
- Policy Action Guide*
- Sustainability tips*
- Resources
- For more information

* Opportunity to send questions for panel response

Policy Definition

- A plan or course of action, as of a government, political party, or business, intended to influence or determine decisions, actions, or other matters*
- Can be Federal, State, tribal, local, or agency-specific and may include legislation, mandates, rules, memoranda of agreement/understanding (MOU/MOA), interagency agreements, or regulatory requirements
- Formalize procedures regarding practice, personnel, administration, fiscal matters, and other issues
- In a system of care, policy can support and sustain the efforts of interagency partners and community stakeholders responsible for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, youth, and families

*Pickett, J., et al. (Eds.). (2000). *American heritage dictionary of the English language* (4th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Key Partners

- Interagency committee, including family representation
- Administrative support staff
- System analyst
- Government relations staff
- Legislative staff
- Advocacy organization staff
- Legal counsel, as needed
- Evaluation staff
- Other?

Key Activity: Pre-Planning Phase

Example: Performing a nationwide environmental scan of systems of care legislation to determine if there is any applicability to your State, Tribe, or community

- Information Gateway State Statutes Search (www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/)

Wisdom Shared: Pre-Planning Phase

“Building relationships before policy was important. No substitute for relationships to build trust. The group then focused on capturing goals, vision given the work being done together. The identified key elements were essential to continue beyond specific individual people... We started with a memorandum of understanding instead of a contract which spoke to the relationships we had built. Contracts eventually happened... Patience and persistence is very important in policy development work – some parts of the work take time before you see the results.”

- Systems of Care Project Director, Bedford-Stuyvesant Community, New York City

Key Activity: Planning Phase

Example: Identify policies that impede implementation (e.g., confidentiality, data sharing, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, out-of-community placement costs borne by the State)

Wisdom Shared: Planning Phase

“Our Memorandum of Understanding puts the System of Care development into standards so that it carries on after our System of Care champions are no longer here. The key ingredient is getting players to buy into the philosophy of System of Care and Child & Family Teams at each level. It is a **MUST DO!**”

- System of Care Project Director, Alamance County, North Carolina

Activity: Implementation Phase

Example: Developing executive orders, legislation, statutes, interagency agreements, MOUs, or governor mandates

Wisdom Shared: Implementation Phase

“Be patient. It took a lot of time and repetition to explain what we were doing and why. People really had a difficult time understanding that we were going to work as a team for the benefit of families and children and that it was not going to just be lip service...Human Services had to do most of the work when it came to writing up the Memorandum of Understanding and by-laws, etc.

- System of Care Project Director, Jefferson County, Colorado

Activity: Continuous Quality Improvement Phase

Examples:

- Having evaluators participate in the development of new policies for your system of care
- Ensuring that any new policy has a set of outcome measures built in from the beginning in order to track the efficacy of the policy as it relates to your community-based system of care

Wisdom Shared: Continuous Quality Improvement Phase

“Each year the Interagency Oversight Committee came up with 4 goals that they wanted to work on for that year. Benchmarks were established and percent increases or decreases were developed. This was a good way to evaluate how the Interagency Oversight Committee was working as a team.”

- System of Care Project Director, Jefferson County, Colorado

Policy Action Guide

- What is it?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What's included in the guide?
- How do I use it?

What Is the Policy Action Guide?

- Supports the process of identifying and advancing policy strategies to improve child welfare systems and practices
- Helps users assess their policy issues, select a policy approach, and develop next steps to implement that approach
- Helps plan policy approaches collaboratively

What Is the Policy Action Guide? (cont.)

- Focuses on five policy approaches:
 - Legislation
 - Regulations
 - Proclamations
 - Multiparty agreements (e.g., MOUs)
 - Internal policies

Who Is the Intended Audience?

- Child welfare agencies and professionals
- Agencies and professionals from related fields
- Community organizations
- Collaborations/partnerships
- Anyone seeking to improve outcomes for children and families through policy

What's Included in the Guide?

- Assessment
 - Define your issue
 - Specify objectives
 - Review existing policies and policy gaps
 - Determine the factors that support or restrict your policy initiative
 - Fillable PDF and Word forms for download

What's Included? (cont.)

- Selection Guide
 - Description of the five policy approaches
 - Includes definitions, examples, and reasons you may or may not want to select each approach

What's Included? (cont.)

- Action Plan Forms
 - Considerations and fields
 - Understanding the context and process
 - Identifying who should be involved (leadership and partners)
 - Building support
 - Developing drafts
 - Planning outreach and implementation strategies
 - Identifying resources
 - Assessing the results
 - Resources
 - Next Steps Template
 - Fillable PDF and Word forms for download

Policy Action Guide Walk Through

- www.childwelfare.gov/policyactionguide

Sustainability Tips

- Multiparty agreements should not extend for more than 1 year and should be renewed annually. This protects you from an agreement that is not working and also ensures that the agreement will reflect any changes that are occurring.
- Be as specific as possible in any agreement as it will dictate the rules of engagement and lessen the chance of miscommunication between the parties involved.
- Ensure that individuals from all key stakeholders are involved in drafting the policy and that the organizations endorse the final version.

Sustainability Tips (cont.)

- If your policy activity requires legislation, make sure you have developed ongoing relationships with key senate and house members who can sponsor the bill in both chambers of the legislature.
- Make sure you have a robust communications campaign to tell the story of your system of care outcomes.
- Create forums so that people who have been involved in your system of care can talk about their experiences.

Sustainability Tips (cont.)

- Create provider groups so they can articulate the strengths and challenges of providing services and make recommendations on policy changes that can help them work at an optimum level.
- Include data reporting as a part of all policies that are developed for your system of care.

Resources

Information Gateway: Systems of Care Homepage

- www.childwelfare.gov/management/reform/soc/

Systems of Care Infrastructure Toolkits

- www.childwelfare.gov/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/soctoolkits/index.cfm

Policy Action Guide

- www.childwelfare.gov/policyactionguide

Family Engagement in Child Welfare Video Series

- www.childwelfare.gov/familyvideos

For More Information

Aracelis Gray, Director

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation
Center for Systems of Care

AGray@icfi.com, 703-225-2290

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