Big Bend Community Based Care

Quality Practice Standards Data for Case Management

FY 10/11 Annual Report

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Section 1: Overview and Review Methodology

Overview

Big Bend Community Based Care (BBCBC) is the Lead Agency for Child Welfare services in Florida’s 2nd and 14th Judicial Circuits. Services are provided via sub-contracts with Case Management Organizations (CMO) throughout the twelve County service area.

In Circuit 2, BBCBC sub-contracts with three agencies; DISC Village, Children’s Home Society and Camelot Community Care to provide care management services to children and families in Leon, Wakulla, Franklin, Gadsden, Liberty and Jefferson Counties.

In Circuit 14, BBCBC contracts with Anchorage Children’s Home, Children’s Home Society and Life Management Center to provide care management services to children and families in Bay, Gulf, Calhoun, Holmes, Jackson, and Washington Counties.

This report focuses on findings from the case file reviews conducted by BBCBC Quality Management (QM) staff during Quarters 1 through Quarter 3 of fiscal year 10/11. During Quarter 4 of this fiscal year, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) suspended base and side-by-side reviews. This allowed QA staff to focus on conducting Peer Reviews of Our Kids, Inc. to support actions requested by the Barahona Corrective Action Plan and to conduct the pilot testing of the Quality of Services Review protocol and tool to be implemented in FY 11/12.

APPLA case reviews were not suspended in Q4, as this is a requirement of our Federal Quality Improvement Plan. BBCBC’s Quality Assurance Specialists (QAS) staff completed 7 case file reviews which focused solely on the standards applicable to youth with a goal of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA).

Case Practice Review Methodology

BBCBC’s QM Team provided quality assurance case file reviews for Circuits 2 and 14, utilizing two samples of twenty-five cases each quarter. For the service area, fifty cases were reviewed each quarter with a total of 150 case files being reviewed over the fiscal year.

The cases reviewed over the three quarters of FY 10/11 included 48 Side-By-Side reviews completed jointly by Department of Children and Families (DCF) Region QA and BBCBC’s QAS. The joint review process allowed cases to be reviewed in collaboration, using the same standards to reach consensus on measuring performance. The process also created an environment that increases inter-rater reliability and build partnerships.
Base Reviews were conducted for 102 cases and were completed by BBCBC QAS in cooperation with certified QA reviewers from BBCBC’s sub-contracted case management agencies. All cases were reviewed for specific indicators utilizing the standardized DCF electronic *Quality Practice Standards for Case Management* web-based tool to look at performance regarding achieving safety, permanency and well-being for children under review.

In-Depth Reviews were also completed for 4 cases from each quarterly side-by-side review sample. The In-Depth Review consisted of case specific interviews with the focus child as well as other case participants including when applicable; parents, foster parents, relative caregivers, the Guardian Ad Litem, service providers and care managers.

**Section 2: Case Practice Trend Data by Focus Area**

The chart below compares the aggregate scores for each of the five *Windows into Practice* focus areas: Assessment, Family Engagement, Service Planning, Promoting Case Planning and Supervisory Reviews. The line graphs for Circuit 2 and 14 cover Q1-Q3 of FY 10/11.
Fiscal Year Comparison - 09/10 and 10/11

Circuit 2 - Quality Practice Standards by Focus Area

Assessment
- FY 09/10: 65%
- FY 10/11: 68%
- CFSR Goal: 74%

Family Engagement
- FY 09/10: 65%
- FY 10/11: 68%
- CFSR Goal: 74%

Service Planning
- FY 09/10: 65%
- FY 10/11: 72%
- CFSR Goal: 74%

Promoting Case Progress
- FY 09/10: 65%
- FY 10/11: 70%
- CFSR Goal: 74%

Supervisory Reviews
- FY 09/10: 60%
- FY 10/11: 65%
- CFSR Goal: 74%

Circuit 14 - Quality Practice Standards by Focus Area

Assessment
- FY 09/10: 75%
- FY 10/11: 71%
- CFSR Goal: 95%

Family Engagement
- FY 09/10: 76%
- FY 10/11: 71%
- CFSR Goal: 95%

Service Provision & Planning
- FY 09/10: 79%
- FY 10/11: 80%
- CFSR Goal: 95%

Promoting Case Progress
- FY 09/10: 78%
- FY 10/11: 78%
- CFSR Goal: 95%

Supervisory Reviews
- FY 09/10: 65%
- FY 10/11: 68%
- CFSR Goal: 95%
Section 3: Summary of Case Practice Trends

1. Assessment

The Assessment section measures the quality of critical assessments for children and families completed by case managers. For FY 10/11, performance on the Assessment focus area remained relatively stable. Circuit 14 had a slight (1%) increase in assessment scoring, while Circuit 2 saw a slight (2%) decrease.

**Strengths:** The case file reviews documented that assessments are being completed consistently for children at 13 and 15 years of age, as required (93%). Additionally, assessments required prior to placement in residential group care were also completed consistently. Ongoing assessments of children’s and out-of-home caregivers’ needs were conducted and assessments of the children’s mental and behavioral health needs were regularly completed.

**Opportunities:** Overall assessment scores declined this fiscal year by a small percentage in both Circuits. The quarterly case file reviews documented deficiencies in documenting/entering initial and six-month family assessments in Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN), which resulted in scores ranging from 30%-50% in both Circuits. Also effecting lower scores in family assessments was a change in State directives for scoring the assessment standards. The new criteria required that Family Assessments not approved in FSFN by the Supervisor be scored as not meeting the Standard.

Additional focus is also needed in documenting Family Assessments prior to reunification or placement in an unlicensed home; documenting ongoing assessment of the mother’s and father’s needs for case planning purposes; and consistently ensuring the assessment of children’s educational, physical and dental health care needs.

2. Family Engagement

This focus area measures the quality of case managers’ efforts at engaging and supporting families in decision-making. In Circuit 2 performance indicators for this focus area were slightly higher in FY 10/11, whereas Circuit 14 performance decreased 3%.

**Strengths:** The case file reviews documented that concerted efforts were made to ensure visitation between the child, parent and siblings in 87% of cases reviewed and concerted efforts were made to maintain children’s important connections while in out-of-home care (93% overall).
Opportunities: Additional focus is needed to encourage the mother (45% overall) and father (41% overall) to participate in decision making: supporting both parents’ engagement with services; and ensuring informed consent or court approval is obtained and maintained for the provision of psychotropic medications (Circuit 2 60%).

3. Service Planning and Provision

The Planning and Provision section measure whether the services provided to the children and families promote positive outcomes and improve overall well-being. Overall scores in this focus area decreased slightly for both Circuits in FY 10/11.

Strengths: Quality reviews documented that concerted efforts were made to provide or arrange for appropriate services for families to protect their children (98% overall); service referrals were consistent with the identified service needs (88% overall); and ongoing efforts were being documented to identify, locate, and evaluate other potential relative placements when a child remained in out-of-home care (92% overall). Circuit 14 excelled at ensuring immediate and emerging safety concerns were met (94%).

Opportunities: Additional efforts and focus are needed to ensure that all immediate and emerging safety concerns are addressed, as Circuit 2 received 61% compliance for this standard. Other opportunities for improvement include ensuring youth are consistently afforded the opportunities to participate in normal life activities (61% overall); increasing the frequency of case manager contacts with children to meet the 30-day requirement (69% overall); and ensuring appropriate dental and physical health care services are provided for children.

4. Promoting Case Progress

The Promoting Case Progress focus area evaluates the guidance provided by case management toward achieving and maintaining permanency for children. This focus area also saw decreased scores in FY 10/11. Circuit 2 scores decreased 4% and Circuit 14 decreased 8% compared to annual data for FY 09/10.

Strengths: Reviews documented that children’s placements were stable and without notable risk of disruption (92% overall); appropriate steps were taken to process and approve adoptive families; Judicial Reviews were held timely and contained appropriate information (93% overall).

Opportunities: Areas of need for improvement include placing sibling groups together when in out-of-home care; assuring that ICWA forms (signed by both parents) are included in the case file as required by Federal statute; and filing for TPR when federal standards are met (or documenting the compelling reasons that TPR is not filed).
5. Supervisory Review and Oversight

Supervisory Reviews have three components; completion every 90 days (a change in FY 10/11 from a quarterly requirement in previous fiscal years), addressing issues related to child safety, permanency and well-being, and providing guidance and ensuring follow-up with their staffs.

Both Circuit 2 and Circuit 14 scores decreased this fiscal year with an overall compliance level of 64%. Critical contributors to this decrease were not meeting the every 90 days portion of the Standard and the lack of documentation of the supervisor’s follow-up with their staffs to assure that their directives were carried out. The area of highest compliance continues to be the documentation of issues related to safety, permanency, and well-being (74% for both Circuits).

Section 4: Review of APPLA cases

In Quarter 4 of this fiscal year, Base reviews were suspended in order to focus on the Barahona action plan and to implement a pilot for the new QSR process. However, reviews of cases involving youth with a permanency goal of Another Planned Permanency Living Arrangement were implemented as in the past to provide data for the State’s Performance Improvement Reports for the Department of Health and Human Services.

BBCBC’s QAS completed 7 APPLA-specific reviews during the 4th quarter of FY 10/11. For youths with the goal of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA), sub-contractors:

- Consistently made concerted efforts to assure that children were adequately prepared to transition into Independent Living.

- Assure that children’s living arrangements were permanent.

Each of the seven APPLA cases reviewed received 100% compliance rating for each Standard item.
Section 5: Addressing Findings

Quality Improvement focus areas for FY 11/12:

1. Assessment

BBCBC’s QM Team initiated Quality Improvement (QI) Workshops for each Circuit in FY 10/11. These workshops will continue in FY 11/12 and focus on providing sub-contractor Program Managers and Supervisors with a forum in which they can receive detailed data for their own staffs, analyze their own data, brainstorm with others regarding potential root causes and countermeasures, and develop their own action plans to address quality and performance deficits.

The most recent QI workshops (March & April, 2011) already began addressing the need for improved performance on Family Assessments. Workshop participants identified three root causes for the noted deficits:

1. Supervisors had not incorporated Family Assessment approvals in FSFN into their routines. Past practice was to formally sign the printed Family Assessment document along with other signatories and to file the original document in the case file.

2. Case Managers’ tendency to submit Family Assessments for approval at the last minute, leaving insufficient time to allow Supervisor to review the Assessment, request and receive their recommended edits from case managers, approve the edits, then document the final approval in FSFN prior to the six-month deadline.

3. The lack of a user-friendly tracking mechanism by which they could monitor upcoming Family Assessment due dates and timeliness.

As a result, the groups developed and adopted a Quality Improvement Plan to address the above root causes. The workshop participants agreed upon a unified group of strategies to address the issues.

Program Managers and Supervisors agreed to:

- Added FSFN approval to their own processes for Family Assessments.

- Agreed to require their staffs to submit Family Assessments for their approval at 5-months after the last Assessment to allow them time to properly review them, seek necessary clarifications and approve them prior to the 6-month deadline.
The QM Director agreed to:

- Work with the data specialists and QA Analyst to develop a FSFN/Business Objects report to be included in the weekly Case Status Summary management tool that would identify upcoming Family Assessments at least one-month in advance, so that Supervisors could be proactive in assuring timely submissions by their staffs.

  (This report has been developed and has been in use for the month of July. Indications are that timeliness is improving.)

2. **Family Engagement**

BBCBC has one Family Centered Practice (FCP) training module left to complete before all Network providers will have completed the entire curriculum. The FCP training focuses exclusively on engaging families in all stages of dependency services. Scores related to family engagement are anticipated to improve as the last training is completed and staffs fully integrate the components into their practice.

Engaging families in providing informed consent for the provision of psychotropic medications will be reiterated throughout the Network. A plan for a follow-up review process on medication documentation is being developed in coordination with plans to assure health-related well-being items are consistently addressed by service providers.

3. **Service Provision and Planning**

A special quality improvement initiative is already underway for Independent Living services for FY 11/12. This initiative should spark improved performance scores related to Service Planning and Provision for the teens and young adults that we serve. BBCBC has engaged a national consultant to assess current services, gather input from teens/young adults, service providers, case managers, caregivers and others and make recommendations for new strategies to improve services. The initiative is scheduled for July – December 2011, with implementation of recommendations to begin in January 2010.

Additionally, the QM and Contract Administration staffs are currently working together to revise the Independent Living quality practice/contract monitoring tools to better address all requirements. In FY 11/12, BBCBC’s QM Team will be completing a quality review specifically for children ages 13-17 and 18+ to assess progress in providing Independent Living services.
4. Promoting Case Progress

BBCBC has begun efforts to identify the root causes for the failure to assure TPR for children meeting the federal criteria. A recent review of Adoption goal cases revealed that child-specific recruiting efforts must be increased and improved. BBCBC Adoptions sub-contracts are under revision to include requirements for specific recruitment plans and regular reporting of efforts to identify families for eligible children without identified adoptive placements. BBCBC’s QM Team will also complete a special quality review for a sample of children eligible for adoption but without identified families to determine the root cause for the delay in permanency.

5. Quality Supervisor Review and Oversight

BBCBC’s QM Team will continue to implement our internal policy to complete quality reviews of a small sample of supervisory reviews each quarter and offer direct guidance and assistance to supervisors in strengthening their reviews. Additionally, the QM Team has joined BBCBC’s Training Team to begin developing a *Supervisory Academy* for FY 11/12. This academy will facilitate on-going supervisor-specific training, technical assistance and peer mentoring to help supervisors grow professionally and gain new skills and experience in their roles.