Devereux Community Based Care of Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast

Annual Summary of Quality Assurance Review Findings Fiscal Year 2014-15
**Annual Report of Case Management Practice Trends:**

**Introduction:**

Devereux Community Based Care of Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast (Devereux CBC) has been the Lead Agency for Circuit 19 since November 2013.

**Quality Assurance Reviews:**

During FY 2014-15, four types of Quality Assurance Reviews were completed: reviews specific to Rapid Safety Feedback in quarters one and three, Targeted Well-being Feedback in quarter two, and Targeted Permanency Feedback in quarter four. The targeting of case reviews on practice areas of safety, well-being and permanency affords an opportunity to target the highest-risk population of children in the child welfare system. This review system also allows us to target age-specific populations to identify key risk factors impacting the safety of children receiving in-home services, appraise efforts to ensure well-being and evaluate stability of permanency for children. Coaching through case consultation is a key component of this process, which is intended to improve case managers’ and supervisors’ critical thinking skills related to risk assessments. During this review period, one hundred thirty-six (136) cases were reviewed; consultations with the case managers and case management supervisors were held on 100% of the reviewed cases. In addition to the targeted case reviews, eight (8) in-depth reviews were completed using the Children’s Bureau Child and Family Services Reviews Onsite Review Instrument; these reviews include the use of stakeholder surveys in addition to the record review tool.

Devereux CBC’s Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement process involves assorted other reviews and monitoring activities for measuring local performance, including those listed below:

- **Daily/Weekly:**
  - Incident Reports
  - Exit Interviews
  - Missing Child Reports
  - Management Reports
  - Management Meetings

- **Monthly:**
  - Contract Performance Measures
  - Scorecard Performance
  - Monthly Performance Measures Meetings

- **Quarterly:**
  - Florida Child and Family Service Reviews (FCFSR)
  - Rapid Safety Feedback Quality Assurance Reviews (RSF)
  - Quarterly Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Meetings
  - Safety Contracts
  - Psychotropic Medication Monitoring

- **Annually:**
  - Annual Provider Monitoring
  - Other Case File Reviews (TANF)

**Addressing Findings:**

Strengths and Gaps (areas in need of improvement) are identified through the RSF and the FCFSR process and are addressed at quarterly CQI meetings. Attendees include staff from the CBC, case management agencies, DCF, CLS, and community providers. Performance data and outcomes are discussed among the attendees and
improvement strategies are developed. These quarterly CQI meetings foster cohesion and partnership between the lead agency and the subcontracted agencies, giving participants a voice in ongoing quality improvement efforts.

Performance trends identified through analysis of contract performance measures and scorecard data are addressed at monthly Performance Measures meetings which include representatives from the CBC and case management agencies. Again, data and findings are discussed, root causes identified, and improvement strategies developed.

Additionally, Devereux CBC will continue to address the analysis of findings in the Annual Quality Management/Performance and Quality Improvement Plan.

Other ongoing improvement efforts include system of care trainings in such areas as incident reporting, ICPC/OCS procedures, protocol for missing children and human trafficking.

The charts below illustrate the overall percentage ratings for one hundred thirty-six (136) case file reviews, which include sixty-eight (68) Rapid Safety, thirty-six (36) Targeted Well-being and thirty-two (32) Targeted Permanency Reviews completed during FY 2014-15.

**Safety:**

*The target population was children 0-4 years of age receiving in-home services.*
Well-being:

The target population was children 5-12 years of age in out-of-home care.
**Permanency:**

The target population was children 13-17 years of age who entered out-of-home care at the age of 13 or above and who have been in out-of-home care for six months.

*Quality Assurance Case Review Items tracked across all case types creating a foundation for all three review types for FY 2014-15*
**Practice Trends:**

**Safety**

One area of strength identified is Devereux CBC’s provision of services to protect children receiving in-home services. In addition to strong outcomes in this area for both quarters during which Rapid Safety Feedback Reviews were completed, including a 5% increase from the 1st quarter to the 3rd, this strength is further illustrated by Devereux CBC having exceeded the established target for the contract performance measure regarding abuse or neglect during in-home services for the entire fiscal year. Conversely, the agency has seen a steady decline in performance regarding children experiencing abuse or neglect while in out-of-home care, indicating a need for better assessment and monitoring of out-of-home placements.

One of only four items assessed by all four review types completed during this fiscal year, the area of safe case closure demonstrated consistently positive outcomes. This finding stands in correlation with the agency’s performance regarding children with no verified findings of abuse or neglect within six months of case closure, which has regularly exceeded the established target of 95%.

A positive trend is observed in the area of safety planning, which demonstrated a significant improvement from the 1st quarter, during which only 50% of cases reviewed were found to contain safety plans with appropriate action steps and safety monitors, to the 3rd quarter, when this finding increased to 84%. It is believed that this improvement is due in part to ongoing case consultations as part of the review process and in part to expanded utilization of the new safety methodology.

**Permanency**

Data from both performance measures and quality assurance reviews indicate consistent success in locating placements which enable siblings to remain together. It is apparent, however, that additional efforts are needed for those siblings who are not placed together, as case review outcomes indicate a significant deficiency in the area of ensuring sufficient visitation between these siblings.

Another consistent trend identified by a combination of performance measures and case review data is the agency’s continuing struggle with maintaining placement stability. A further downward trend in this area is expected as the agency makes great strides toward resolving the critical shortage of foster homes in Circuit 19; as additional homes are licensed, an increase in placement moves is anticipated due to the opportunities provided by the increase in local capacity, e.g., the return of children currently placed outside the circuit and relocation of children to homes able to accommodate sibling groups who are currently separated.

With the exception of achieving permanency for children in out-of-home care for 12-23 months, which has demonstrated a strong upward trend and consistently exceeded the expectation of 43.7%, permanency outcomes measures overall represent a persistent challenge to the agency. Case review outcomes reveal that while an appropriate permanency goal is established in a timely manner in most cases, there is a lack of concerted efforts to achieve the permanency goal within the required timeframe. This finding is corroborated by performance measures outcomes concerning the achievement of permanency for children in out-of-home care within 12 months of removal, which have fluctuated considerably over the course of the fiscal year (from a low of 29.1% to as high as 46%) but have exhibited a distinctly downward trend overall. Other areas needing improvement include efforts to locate relative placements, preserve connections, and support positive relationships with parents for children in out-of-home care.
Well-Being

While case review outcomes reveal significant shortcomings in providing for the physical needs of children in out-of-home care, recent performance measures data show an encouragingly upward trend, with outcomes for both medical and dental services currently exceeding the expectation of 95%.

With regard to ensuring that children’s educational needs are met, data from case reviews appears to contradict performance measures outcomes, as reviewers reported only 39% of children in cases reviewed (age 5-12) had all of their educational needs met, but performance measures demonstrate that of children who remain in out-of-home care until age 18, 92.3% (26 of 28) had either successfully completed or were enrolled in secondary education, vocational training, or adult education. While this could be interpreted as a deficiency in providing for educational needs of younger children or those in out-of-home care for shorter periods of time, the reviewers report that the substandard result was more indicative of a lack of documentation than a true failure to ensure children’s needs were met.

The frequency and quality of case manager contacts with both children and parents is an area in need of significant improvement. These two items were assessed in each of the four types of reviews completed during this fiscal year, allowing for four full quarters of data collection. Neither of these areas exceeded more than 42% of cases reviewed found to contain visits of sufficient frequency and quality to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of the child and promote achievement of case goals, and both exhibited a sharp decline between the 3rd and 4th quarters. Data from performance measures confirms that children are consistently seen within 30 days; the gaps in frequency of contacts are occurring in circumstances requiring that the child be seen more often than every 30 days.

Supervisory Consultations:

Supervisory consultation is a persistent area of concern. Following a brief surge during the 1st quarter case reviews, rates of performance in this area declined dramatically and returned to levels consistent with the average for fiscal year 2013-2014. Through the case consultations conducted on 100% of cases reviewed, reviewers are able to reiterate the critical necessity of supervisory oversight and follow up and the importance of documenting supervisory consultation and/or review, which case consultations reveal actually occurs much more often than is reflected in the case records.

Safe Case Closure:

Despite a slight decline from the previous fiscal year, safe case closure remains an area of strength for the agency. As previously stated, the positive findings of reviewers in this area are substantiated by consistently high outcomes on the performance measure regarding recidivism rates in families following provision of services and case closure.

In-depth Case Reviews:

During FY2014-15 Devereux CBC’s Quality Management Department staff were required to complete the Child and Family Services Review Online Training for States modules. Devereux CBC completed eight (8) practice reviews utilizing the Children’s Bureau Child and Family Services Reviews Onsite Review Instrument. The chart below includes eight cases, by quarter, and reflects the rating outcomes for both in-home and out-of-home (foster care) cases.
While the small sample size makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions, the outcomes of the in-depth reviews are somewhat telling as to the impact of the difference in rating style from that of the targeted case reviews. Where the targeted case reviews allow only two option for rating each item, the FCFSR review tool offers the option of ‘partially achieved’. When items considered in both reviews are compared, the outcomes are vastly different when this option is taken into account. An example of this disparity is the area of providing for the child’s physical health needs; while the targeted permanency reviews returned a finding that these needs were not being met for 61% of the cases reviewed, the in-depth FCFSR reviews gave a rating of ‘not achieved’ in only 14% of the cases reviewed, with the remaining 86% evenly divided between ‘substantially achieved’ and ‘partially achieved’. Other areas assessed displayed even more striking disparities, which could have a significant impact on the agency’s approach to addressing the areas identified as needing improvement.

Requests for Action:

Of the 144 total Reviews completed, there were twelve (12) Requests for Action (RFA) sent to the case management agencies. Any immediate safety concern identified by the reviewer resulted in an RFA. Three (3) RFAs stemmed from issues related to Safety Plans that were either unable to be located or were lacking in sufficient content, including contact with the safety monitors. Seven (7) RFAs involved Psychotropic Medications where either the medical tab in FSFN needed to be completed or not being able to locate medical reports. The remaining RFAs required the Case Management Agency to close the loop on identified case tasks.
Initiatives to Address Deficits and Improve Practice:

Below is a snapshot of DCBC’s targeted efforts for FY 2014-15 to improve safety, permanency and well-being of children as well as improvements in our local system of care.

FY 2014-15

- Devereux CBC implemented a new case transfer process
- Devereux CBC began the implementation of Florida Safety Decision Making Methodology
- Devereux CBC implemented a second County Director position.
- Devereux CBC added two new Foster Home Care/Licensing Providers.
- Devereux CBC contracted with a Nurse Care Coordinator to assist with the children’s Health Care Plan
- Devereux CBC hired a Performance Improvement Manager

Russell Kline, MS

Quality Management Director

Date: 8/12/15