Summary of Case Management Practice Trends

Since the Family Support Services of North Florida, Inc (FSSNF) believes in a continuous quality improvement system that includes input by all levels of FSSNF staff and partners across departmental and community lines, and follows the family-centered practice principles, the FSSNF Quality Management (QM) Department conducted quarterly Quality Service Reviews which consisted of case reviews and interviews with the case participants. The interviews, in other words, provided "the story behind the data".

During fiscal year 2011-2012, twenty-four (24) Quality Service Reviews were conducted by the FSSNF QM Department. The results of these reviews were discussed during individual debriefings, supervisory and director meetings, Continuous Quality Improvement meetings, and Data meetings with our Case Management Organization (CMO) partners. The benefit of discussing and sharing these results assisted in our efforts to encourage individuals to work across departmental and community lines to improve quality of services and to realize the importance of customer satisfaction and services provided to the children and families served.

Overall, there were several areas of consistent performance and significant progress as well as areas of opportunities for improvement. The FSSNF demonstrated consistent performance in the achievement of Safety from Exposure to Threats of Harm, Living Arrangement, Permanency, Physical & Dental Health, Early Learning & Development, Academic Status, Parent & Caregiver Functioning, Planning for Safe Closure, and Maintaining Quality Connections. The areas of opportunities for improvement were identified as Child Vulnerability, Stability, Emotional Well-Being, and Pathway to Independence. As a result, the FSSNF QM Department provided additional training and instituted the "Continuous Quality Improvement Shoulder-Shadowing Training". This training consisted of the FSSNF QM Department going to each CMO location to answer questions from caseworkers individually and provide support to the CMO management staff. It was a supportive role to reinforce the "we have your back" concept instead of a "we got you" concept. These steps also enabled FSSNF to ensure the involvement, support, and input of the parents and caregivers regarding our provision of and/or the need for improvement in the delivery of our services.

Child and Family Status Indicators

The children and families were seen in their homes, schools, daycares, and other-related areas as required at least monthly. The QSR reviews also noted strengths in
the safety concerns, management of risks to stability, and living arrangement with an overall performance rating of 80%. With the assistance of the FSSNF Kids Central Placement Office, FSSNF and our CMO partners were able to quickly handle safety concerns in placements where safety plans or other plans of action were implemented to ensure the safety and stability of the children being served.

Other areas of strength involved permanency, more specifically, the progress towards adoption. In a continuous effort to assist with Foster Care Redesign and helping children to return home safely or to achieve another permanent living arrange such as a “forever family”, the FSSNF QM Department implemented the process of conducting a permanency staffing on every child in out-of-home care each month at the 4th, 7th, 10th, 12th interval and every 3-4 months thereafter based on the child’s date of removal. Emergency permanency staffings were held as needed regardless of the child’s date of removal. In addition, the FSSNF QM Department revised and implemented a permanency staffing referral form that includes, but not limited to, the following information: Separated Sibling staffings, independent living, child protection team, incident reporting, and permanency roundtable. The overall performance rating for the progress towards adoption yielded 80% which reflects FSSNF’s consistent performance in exceeding the target for adoptions each year.

Strengths in performance were also demonstrated in the areas of physical & dental health, early learning & development, academic status, and parent & caregiver functioning which resulted in an overall performance rating of 82%. With such initiatives as the Quarterly Family Coalition training/meeting and the involvement of FSSNF’s Project Specialist for Education to name a few, FSSNF has continued to move in the right direction in ensuring adequate care and support for the children and caregivers being served.

The areas of opportunities for improvement were identified as Child Vulnerability, Stability, Emotional Well-Being, and Pathway to Independence. After continual analysis, FSSNF realized that there were several youth who were dually involved in the child dependency system as well as the juvenile delinquency system. These youth were also falling into several performance categories such as an increase in the number of incident reports being submitted, psychotropic medication, and independent living. FSSNF concluded that additional steps had to be taken to address this specific population of children. As a result, FSSNF Independent Living Program and other FSSNF departments partnered with the Department of Juvenile Justice, the State Attorney’s Office, the Public Defender’s Office, Georgetown University, and other community partners to implement the “Crossover Youth Practice Model”. This model allows communication and collaboration amongst the professionals who are working with the same youth to ensure appropriate service provision.
Practice Performance Indicators

The areas of strength involved Planning for Safe Closure and Maintaining Quality Connections. These areas are primarily an extension of permanency. The FSSNF QM Department followed the same process as indicated in the aforementioned “Child and Family Status Indicators” section. Also, for the 2nd and 3rd quarters, although determined to be actual opportunities for improvement, there were steady improvements in the areas of Engagement Efforts, Voice & Choice, Teamwork, Assessment & Understanding, Planning Transition & Life Adjustments, Implementation, and Evaluating & Adjusting. As a result, the FSSNF QM Department provided additional training and instituted the “Continuous Quality Improvement Shoulder-Shadowing Training” as mentioned above. This training consisted of the FSSNF QM Department going to each CMO location to answer questions from caseworkers individually and provide support to the CMO management staff. It was a supportive role to reinforce the “we have your back” concept instead of a “we got you” concept.

The FSSNF QM Department also incorporated the quarterly completion of “Caregiver/Parental Surveys” by using the selected cases from the Quality of Practice Standards (ie BASE review) review sample list to ensure the involvement, support, and input of the parents and caregivers regarding our provision of and/or the need for improvement in the delivery of our services. The incorporation of the Caregiver/Parental surveys allowed FSSNF to keep in line with the Family-Centered Practice principles. The survey’s customer service-related questions were initially developed by FSSNF’s Strategic Planning Steering Committee at the beginning of the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

The implementation of the weekly Continuous Quality Improvement meetings and Data meetings with our CMO partners and their internal quality management staff followed by monthly meetings to include the directors have resulted in FSSNF’s overall improvement in performance as reflected on the scorecard. During the meetings, FSSNF reviews data concerns and directs staff on what needs to be done to correct the concerns. We have a strong data team that continually assists FSSNF in driving performance measures.

Addressing Findings

As a part of FSSNF’s continuous quality improvement process, the results of these reviews will continue to be discussed during individual debriefings, supervisory and director meetings, Continuous Quality Improvement meetings, and Data meetings with our Case Management Organization (CMO) partners. These meetings will continue to
be held weekly and/or monthly to include board members until further notice. Afterwards, the FSSNF QM Department will work with our CMO partners, as needed, in developing an action plan to improve child welfare practice. The benefit of discussing and sharing these results will assist FSSNF in our efforts to encourage individuals to work across departmental and community lines to improve quality of services and to realize the importance of customer satisfaction and services provided to the children and families served.

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