Sarasota Family YMCA, Inc.
Safe Children Coalition

Quality Assurance Review Findings
and Performance Outcome Results

FY 2011-2012 Annual Report
Summary of Case Management Practice Trends

The primary purpose of the Sarasota Family YMCA, Safe Children Coalition (SCC), Quality Management System is to strengthen practice, improve the timeliness, accessibility, quality and effectiveness of services, and increase natural and enduring community supports for children and families. During Fiscal Year 2011-2012, SCC demonstrated significant progress in several key quality case practice indicators. There were also opportunities identified to improve the quality of services provided to the children and families we serve.

There were several areas of positive performance identified though the Quality Services review process during the past fiscal year. Twenty reviews were conducted during FY11-12 utilizing the Quality of In-Depth Services Review Standards which were conducted in collaboration with our three case management organization Quality Assurance staff. The DCF Contract Manager also participated in two reviews to observe the QSR process. Overall the results from the in-depth review process demonstrated quality case practice and a strong system of care in Circuit 12 to support children and families in accessing appropriate services. Gaps were identified during the reviews, discussed and analyzed at Continuous Quality Improvement meetings, and strategies developed to improve practices both internally and a systems level.

SCC has demonstrated consistent performance in the achievement of safety outcomes. The in-depth reviews noted the areas of Safety from Exposure to Threats of Harm and Child Vulnerability to be a strength within our agency. An area identified for improvement is the mitigation of vulnerability through adequate and appropriate safety planning with the caregivers. Additional training has been offered and a Tip of the Week distributed to all case management staff to increase the quality of assessments to determine if a child is safe or unsafe, and the development of safety plans that control and manage the threat of danger to the children.

Children are seen consistently with each child seen at least monthly, with more frequent visits as needed to assess changing circumstances, recognize achievements and modify interventions toward the goal of family stability with safe and successful case closure. The intensity of services, family engagement, and sense of urgency drive focused visits to the home. SCC remains consistently above statewide performance with regard to children seen, with 100% of children being seen in nine of the twelve months of FY11-12.

The in-depth reviews noted stability of children’s living arrangement and placements, school settings, and relationships to be strengths within our system of care. A key strength of the SCC is the diligent efforts made to ensure Placement Stability for children who must be removed from their home and placed in an out-of-home care setting. SCC exceeded the state target of 86% on performance measure FS306 – the percentage of children with no more than two
placements within 12 months of removal was 87.35% for FY 11-12. SCC performance was 86.77% in the first quarter, 78.11% in the second quarter, 84.89% in the third quarter, 87.19% in the fourth quarter with three of the four quarters exceeding statewide performance on this key performance measure.

Permanency is an area identified in the in-depth reviews as an opportunity for improvement. SCC continues to strive to maintain permanent connections for children in care and continues to implement a Family Finders program with the intent to foster connections for children placed in out-of-home settings. The percentage of children in out-of-home care 24 months or longer on July 1 who achieved permanency prior to their 18th birthday and by June 30 was 48.81% in FY11-12, which exceeded the target of 29.10%. The SCC achieved the performance outcome measure for the goal of reunification for children within 12 months of the latest removal for FY2011-2012 with an overall performance of 77.06%.

The Safe Children Coalition continues to achieve success in children attaining permanency through reunification with family members and adoption. The SCC has exceeded the target for adoptions for several years, and in FY2011-2012 successfully completed 116 adoptions. The percentage of adoptions finalized within 24 months of the latest removal improved from 33.93% in FY2009-2010 to 46.85% in FY2010-2011; to 51.75% in the current fiscal year. SCC attributes its success in exceeding its adoption target for several years to best practices associated with concurrent planning and timely/responsive services. Concurrent planning encourages early assessment of potential adoption to avoid delay to permanency. Case management and adoption specific staff participate in permanency staffings to remain knowledgeable about case progress and potential adoption. As a participant in the statewide Longest Waiting Teen Initiative, SCC has seen amazing results in the decline in the number of youth available for adoption both in the age of the youth waiting for permanency and the length of time waiting to be adopted. Staff dedicated to targeted recruitment events and presentations within the community have aided in the success of finding permanency for children and youth. Building partnerships increases engagement and trust in the adoptions process. SCC works closely with foster and adoptive parents associations, faith based organizations, the Heart Gallery of Sarasota, and Florida Baptist Children’s Home. Providing consistent support develops trust and encourages solutions. All adoptive families receive support throughout the adoption process: Specialized outpatient counseling such as certified reactive attachment therapy and fetal alcohol syndrome services, counseling and supportive services to children and their families, support groups, parent groups, case management, and coordinated services and support with schools and other agencies.

Pathways to Independence is an area identified as an opportunity for improvement through the in-depth review process. Kalish Resource Center for Independent Living is a program within the SCC where youth and young adults
can gain life skills such as GED programs, work experience, budgeting skills, healthy life choices, and formal/informal supports through mentoring are available. Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) as a permanency option is appropriate when reunification, adoption, guardianship and/or placement with a fit and willing relative are not in the best interest of the youth, and may provide a permanency plan that is safe, stable, and of the highest quality. However, it is only appropriate when all other avenues have been explored. SCC has been successful in maximizing existing connections and support systems for youth in care as evidenced by a substantial reduction in youth with the goal of APPLA since 2010 (67 to 10, 82% reduction). Thanks to ongoing efforts by the case management and legal staff the Safe Children Coalition has one of the lowest percentage of youth with a goal of APPLA in the state. The SCC has 4% of the children in the state in OOHC, but less than 1% of those children have a goal of APPLA. Effective strategies to find permanent placements include: Increased participation in joint review of cases with legal services, participation in the Department’s Permanent Connections Project (to assess appropriateness of goal, determine next steps) and SCC Permanent Connections Initiative (to find lifelong supports), interviews conducted with all youth with the APPLA goal, and ongoing system prompts at all case reviews (to continually identify supports and family connections). The SCC has implemented a Family finders program to assist in locating family members to enable children to build permanent connections and relationships. Since August 2011, 99 successful connections and 39 placements have occurred as a result of the Family Finders initiative.

The SCC places significant emphasis on ensuring the well-being of children served by our agency. Necessary services are arranged for those children with identified physical health needs through the Westcoast Access to Children’s Health (WATCH) program. The WATCH program is coordinated through Children’s Medical Services and provides two nurse care coordinators who are co-located with the case management staff to ensure children’s physical health needs are addressed. Completed service referrals are consistent with the needs identified through assessments for physical and mental health needs, and those children with identified needs receive appropriate treatment. Documentation is present to reflect communication with service providers occurs and the information is utilized to ensure the appropriate services are provided to children and family members to promote successful outcomes. The SCC continues to review files for all children in out-of-home care in response to the statewide Barahona Action Plan. As a result of the review several challenges have been identified in accessing dental services due to the low number of dental providers that accept Medicaid patients. The SCC performance has shown significant improvement for Healthcare; Medical/Mental Health Record in FSFN is at 100%; Immunizations are at 100%; Medical Services within the last six months is 96.9%; and Dental Services is currently at 79.1% which reflects a 47.5% improvement since 5/18/2011.
SCC staff have completed Family Centered Services Training and have provided training to several key partners including representatives from the Foster Parent Associations, Guardian ad Litem office, Children's Legal Services, and the Office of Attorney General. We continue to develop and implement strategies to ensure the deployment of family centered practice principles throughout the system of care in order to positively impact outcomes in the critical area of ongoing engagement of families. Concerted efforts are required to promote, support, and maintain positive relationships between the child in care and his or her mother and father. Family team meetings are held at key critical junctures to ensure supports and services are in place to support successful outcomes for children and their families. Concerted efforts were made to actively involve all case participants in the case planning process, the in-depth reviews identified a need for increased participation and engagement of both mothers and fathers to build a relationship with the child and family. The SCC focuses on building a solid foundation for quality case practice as families enter the system of care. A systems redesign has been implemented effective July 1, 2012 which requires the Child Protective Investigator and the Child Welfare Case Manager to conduct a joint Family Team meeting as a part of the case transfer process. The quality of the Initial Family Assessment and the ongoing Family Assessments at critical junctures will be a focus of the SCC this upcoming fiscal year.

Addressing Findings

To ensure excellence and continual improvement, the Safe Children Coalition addresses each area through a team approach. Once an area is identified as an area for improvement based on performance data and quality assurance reviews, the Quality Management department and members of the Continuous Quality Improvement Committee (CQIC) review the data and determine the improvement strategies needed to achieve compliance. Meetings are conducted on a monthly basis, participants include case management program managers and supervisors, quality management staff, and operations staff. A review of the data is completed on all key indicators and results; root cause analysis is conducted, and strategies are developed to address areas in need of improvement.

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