HUMBOLDT COUNTY
COMMUNITY TASK FORCE
Minutes
August 20, 2020 1:30 – 3:30 PM

Zoom Meeting: https://zoom.us/j/99308987590
Meeting ID: 993 0898 7590; Password: 795776

Purpose Statement: Participants will understand the stipulated judgment, Task Force membership roles and responsibilities and will define what success will look like.

I. Welcome and Updates

Ivy Breen, Deputy Branch Director of Child Welfare Services, introduced herself and welcomed everyone to Part 2 of our August 2020 Community Task Force meeting.

During today’s meeting we will hear two presentations: First, the Humboldt County Sheriff’s Office (HCSO) will be giving us a peek inside their investigation process related to child abuse and neglect allegations. After that, our compliance monitors, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP), will discuss our progress in complying with the Attorney General (AG) Stipulated Judgment for Monitor Report-Period 4, which covers September 1, 2019 through February 29, 2020. The next report period ends this month, August 2020.

Ivy asked everyone to complete a quick poll to see who is attending today.
QUICK POLL #1: Who's here?

1. Who is in the room?

- CWS/DHHS (11) 28%
- Medical/Behavioral Health Provider (2) 5%
- Youth/HCTAYC (3) 7%
- Law Enforcement and Probation (4) 9%
- Tribes and Cultural Coaches (7) 16%
- Courts/Legal (2) 5%
- Education and FRCs (3) 7%
- Research/Policy (4) 9%
- Foster Parent/Community Member (1) 2%
- Other Community Service Provider (6) 14%

Ivy handed us over to Investigator Scott Hicks, who will take us through the HCSO investigation process.

II. HCSO Investigation Process

Investigator Hicks explained that the biggest thing about investigations is that no two are the same, so it is difficult to walk us through a specific investigation process. He will focus on the steps taken and how investigations are normally done. After the presentation he will field questions from the group.

a. **The Process**

Investigator Hicks reported the following:

- Reporting lines are monitored 24/7. A stipulation of the settlement agreement is that it must be checked at three-hour intervals; the HCSO checks every two hours.
- The HCSO responds as soon as possible after receiving the report, even when there is not an immediate risk.
- As soon as practical, CWS is notified when HCSO receives a report.
Within 36 hours, a written report must be submitted to CWS:
  o All reports are given a number so that it can be cross-referenced with CWS.
  o Some reports come directly to the HCSO – they receive an incident number and a deputy is assigned.

There are many considerations taken during an investigation. A graphic showed factors that determine how a report of alleged abuse is investigated.
  o HCSO works with the Child Abuse Services Team (CAST) to interview a child so that the story only is told once (can be very traumatic). It is easier to communicate when the team is the same throughout process. CAST attends all sexual abuse and severe physical abuse cases.
  o CWS has moved to a team social worker approach, which also has made their communication easier: social workers and supervisors are more available.
  o HCSO works with other law enforcement agencies to ensure that the victim only deals with one agency throughout the investigation.

Officers and detectives serve various roles in the process. Some goals include:
  o First, ensuring child safety
  o Allow child to be in control of any forensic medical examinations
  o Securing witnesses
  o Coordinating with the District Attorney’s office
  o Ultimately: completing the investigation or forwarding to the Criminal Investigations Division

b. Confidentiality

There are several policies that protect mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect, including:

- **HCSO Policy 330.10.1** – All information regarding the identity of a mandated reporter is confidential and may only be disclosed to the agencies or under the circumstances described in Penal Code SECTION 1167(D)(1). CWS and the DA’s office are authorized recipients of confidential information pursuant to the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA).

- **California Penal Code 1167.5(b)** – It is a misdemeanor to reveal a mandated reporter. The HCSO is open to ideas on how to make things safer/better for reporters. Investigative officers are not to disclose information about mandated reporter; however, sometimes it can be fairly easy to guess who the reporter is based on circumstances.
Investigator Hicks fielded questions and comments from the group. He offered that he can be contacted by email: shicks@co.humboldt.ca.us. Some of the feedback to Investigator Hicks included the following information:

- The North Coast Rape Crisis Team is an excellent resource for 24-hour hotline and sexual assault advocates for all ages and genders. They can be reached at 707-445-2881. The also work with Sheriff’s office to hold evidence that could be used for future reports.
- Deputies receive trauma-informed training and cultural training as components in their regular training through College of the Redwoods. Further, schedules are being changed to accommodate training. The HCSO is open to ideas on how to coordinate additional training. If you have ideas about additional cultural training, please contact them.
- SART exams are given if it is determined that the exam is prudent or the family is asking for one. Advocates always respond for SARTS; the victim can say yes or no to their services. Advocates can also attend the CAST if the family wants them. The hospital mandated reporters may contact the HCSO or CWS. SART nurses at St. Joe’s in Eureka coordinate with other local hospitals when necessary.
- Even when not an immediate risk, HCSO responds as soon as possible. Some good questions were brought up by group about this policy. Investigator Hicks will review and possibly suggest changes to the policies.
- Investigators usually try to limit talking to victim and get information from other sources. When necessary, they respond by opening dialog, not asking questions.
- At the moment, HCSO are not using a risk assessment tool. Investigator Hicks thinks this would be a good idea and is open to further discussion.
- On a case-by-case basis, sometimes HCSO and CWS respond together on a report. They like this because it makes it easier for everyone (quicker communication, victim tells the story only one time).
- HCSO coordinates with CWS to determine when they are no longer involved. CWS is respectful about allowing HCSO to do their investigation. CWS coordinates with HCSO for responding.

Ivy thanked Investigator for presentation, and introduced the next presenters: Arthur Argomaniz and Gayle Samuels from the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) for a report on Monitor Period 4.

III. Monitor Report 4

Arthur and Gayle introduced themselves and encouraged the group to ask questions through chat, which they will watch and respond to. Arthur asked everyone to take a moment to respond to the following three quick polls.
### QUICK POLLS #1 – 4 – Monitor Report:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Q1. How are you doing today?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great</td>
<td>(16) 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good, but tired</td>
<td>(19) 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the workday over yet?</td>
<td>(4) 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Share in chat)</td>
<td>(2) 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Q2. How much do you know about the AG judgment?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>(20) 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar with some aspects</td>
<td>(19) 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>(2) 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>(0) 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Q3. How much do you know about the role of the compliance monitor/CSSP in the judgment?</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Very familiar - I have read the reports or seen presentations by them.</td>
<td>(24) 59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little - I have heard about the reports or that they help with the judgment.</td>
<td>(14) 34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all - Who are these people? What reports?</td>
<td>(3) 7%</td>
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</table>
The polls showed that most of the group was familiar with the judgment and the roles of CSSP as monitor, and most are familiar with the progress of meeting the judgment terms.

Gayle presented the following information: Humboldt AG Settlement – CSSP Monitoring – What We’re Seeing and Hearing. She explained that this report is from the perspective of CSSP and that the pieces that CWS is responsible for has many moving parts and connections. The flow chart is shown from an “outsider” perspective – it follows the flow of reports and the “buckets” that CSSP is monitoring. Portions of the settlement related to the HCSO are not included in today’s presentation.

To complete its report, CSSP spoke with CWS Administration as well as social workers and supervisors. They also hear from stakeholders, such as the Ombuds Office and the HCSO. Some highlights of this presentation included the following information:

- Ethnic and age breakdowns of Humboldt County children and referrals was provided.
- CWS has been increasing staff and working on maintaining current staff.
- A Social Services Aide position can be a step towards becoming a social worker, so CWS is seeing some turnover in these positions, which is a good thing. Ivy reported that we still have some vacancies that are being filled.
- Question asked about capturing demographic information of the mandated reporter. Ivy reported that our statewide case management system (CWS-CMS) does not currently allow for capturing mandated reporter demographic data. There are ongoing discussions with NCCD about what level of anonymous information will be collected Child Protection Reporting Guide (CPRG). Want to ensure there are no hindrances for reporters to use the CPRG and make reports.
- CWS continues to work with Tribal Consultant, Olin Jones, and others to develop protocols and improve communication with tribes. Tribal collaboration is required at each step throughout the life of the case. Further, CWS continues to develop an Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) program, with
a new manager being hired to handle ICWA cases and to streamline that work.

- Joint training between CWS and tribal social services still being developed.
- The Child Protection Reporting Guide (CPRG) is expected to launch this Fall online. This will require some community-wide training opportunities.
- CWS has implemented 24-hour live hotline coverage and electronic reporting to law enforcement.
- A breakdown showed a drop in reports submitted by mandated reporters, most likely due to shelter-in-place restrictions and mandated reporters not seeing children regularly during this time.
- As part of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program and in collaboration with the ICWA office, data regarding effectiveness will be used to evaluate the ICWA program as a whole.
- There was some concern about the number of referrals evaluated out but the numbers have remained consistent.
- Even during COVID shelter-in-place, HCSO deputies and CWS social workers have continued to do in-person responses.
- The CWS case backlog has been significantly reduced.
- CWS is considering the implementation of designated facilitators for meetings.
- The Family Resource Center (FRC) are reporting back engagement rates and this information is tracked.
- CWS is engaged in a Workforce Development Program as well as CQI.

The link to today’s CSSP presentation is as follows (works best with Google Chrome):

https://prezi.com/b3pkpgz362ku/humboldt-ag-settlement/

The link to the full report is as follows:


Arthur closed by thanking CWS for providing data and the time to present their findings today.

IV. Debrief and Next Steps

On behalf of Ivy, who was having technical difficulties, CWS Manager, Nica Meggerson thanked everyone for coming and thanked Scott Hicks, Arthur Argomaniz and Gayle Samuels for their presentations.

The next meeting of the Community Task Force will be held in November 2020. We hope to see you there.
How Reports of Abuse Are Received

- Cross Reports from Child Welfare Services
  - Received via email
  - Each email receives an incident number
- Report of Child Abuse Directly Made to HCSO
  - Receives an incident number and Deputy assigned.
- Child Welfare Services is called as soon as practical
- Suspected Child Abuse Report emailed to Child Welfare Services
Investigation Considerations

- Are the children safe?
- Are other children at risk?
- Did a crime occur?
- What crime?
- How old is victim?
- Has this been previously investigated?
- Social Worker Involvement?
- Would a forensic interview be appropriate?
- Status of suspect?
- Status of potential evidence?
- What Law Enforcement agency/agencies have jurisdiction?
- And much, much, more

Factors that determine how a report of alleged abuse is investigated.
Patrol Deputy Role

- Ensure child safety
- Make appropriate notifications
- Take initial report (speak with reporting party/parent)
- Evaluate need for SART/CAST
- Identify additional victims/witnesses
- Complete Investigation or forward to Criminal Investigations Division

*SART=Sexual Assault Response Team (Forensic Medical Exam)  
*CAST= Child Abuse Services Team (Forensic Interview)
Patrol Sergeant Role

- Ensure proper notifications were made
- Evaluate investigation/make recommendations
- Ensure report is routed properly (CWS, CID)
- Supervise/assist Patrol Deputy (as needed)

*CWS=Child Welfare Services
*CID= Criminal Investigations Division (Detectives)
Detective Role

- Complete Investigations on most sexual abuse cases and severe physical abuse cases
- Attend CAST interviews on these cases
- Follow-Up leads
- Identify potential investigative strategies
- Author and serve search warrants (if appropriate)
- Coordinate with District Attorney’s Office
Detective Sergeant Role

- Weekly reviews ALL calls for service
  - Ensure all child abuse cases are identified
  - Ensure proper notifications were made
  - Ensure follow-up is being conducted

- Evaluates cases for Detective Assignment

- Supervise/assist Detectives as needed
Confidentiality

- **HCSO Policy 330.10.1**
  All information regarding the identity of a mandated reporter is confidential and may only be disclosed to the agencies or under the circumstances described in Penal Code section 1167(d)(1). Child Welfare Services and the District Attorney’s office are authorized recipients of confidential information pursuant to CANRA.

- **California Penal Code 11167.5(b)**
  Any violation of the confidentiality provided by this article is a misdemeanor.

This is included as part of HCSO annual training pursuant to the settlement agreement.
Things to Consider

- Deputy Sheriffs are not to disclose name or identifying information about a mandated reporter.

- A Deputy Sheriff may need to disclose basic information about the allegation to conduct his/her investigation.

- If a child has limited exposure to people outside of the house, it can be easy to guess who made a report.

- Our response is as soon as possible after receiving the report.
Q and A