

**BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM STANDARDS  
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**Meeting of February 6, 2012**

**Open session**

**Minutes Draft**

**Voting Members Present (7): Shelley Cortese, RI Department of Corrections/Chair; Deb DeBare, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Elaine Bucci, RI District Court; Anthony Ward-Smith, Justice Assistance; Mary Osborne, BIP Representative; Elaine Dorazio, Supreme Court Domestic Violence Training & Monitoring Unit; Diane Daigle, Office of the Attorney General.**

**Seats Not Represented (6): Urban League; RI Department of Health; Governor's Office; RI Justice Commission; RI Police Chiefs Association; RI Supreme Court.**

**Additional Participants (10):Michelle Berkley, Supervisor Probation & Parole; Emily Daniels, Probation & Parole/BIPSOC; Heidi DuPerry, Probation & Parole; Jean Embrey, Supervisor Probation & Parole; Deb Ferrante, EBC House; Brendan Horan, Justice Assistance; Rachel Orsinger, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Bryan Riley, FVI; Ingrid Siliezar, Probation & Parole; George Sheehan, RI-BIP.**

## **Materials Distributed:**

**Meeting Agenda: February 6, 2012**

**Meeting Minutes: October 17, 2011**

**Letter Submitted by Bridgemark**

**Domestic Violence Case Data Provided by Justice Assistance**

**2012 Oversight Committee Meeting Dates**

**Shelley Cortese, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:07 pm.**

## **Review of Minutes**

**Minutes from the meeting of October 17, 2011 were reviewed.**

**Deb DeBare made a motion to adopt the October 17, 2011 minutes. Elaine Dorazio seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed. Motion carried.**

## **Introductions**

**Shelley introduced herself and asked that all present introduce themselves and state the agency they represent as there were several new attendees present.**

## **Review Subcommittee Report**

**Emily reported the Comprehensive Certification process for Bridgemark is nearly complete. Emily has met with Mary Osborne and discussed the need for additional training hour submissions for facilitators. Mary submitted a letter laying out the trainings that will be attended by facilitators prior to April 2012 and is asking for an extension of Comprehensive Certification, on behalf of Bridgemark, until the April 2nd Oversight Committee meeting.**

**The letter submitted by Bridgemark outlining the training hours was distributed and reviewed. Deb DeBare asked if the hours presented would fulfill the requirements set by the Comprehensive Standards. Emily stated the hours presented in the letter along with the hours already submitted and reviewed by the Review Subcommittee would bring the facilitators at Bridgemark into compliance with the Comprehensive Standards ongoing training requirements. Deb Ferrante and Rachel expressed concern that the trainings outlined in the letter had not been reviewed by the Review Subcommittee and felt that further discussion would need to take place before determining if the training requirements had been met. As an example; Rachel stated after discussing with the training presenters at RICADV the topics discussed at the “Economic Empowerment: Train the Trainer” she did not feel all the hours submitted for that training should be granted to qualify as fulfilling the Comprehensive Standard requirements. Mary asked if the Coalition felt their own trainings did not meet requirements, then where were programs to seek training**

opportunities? Shelley and Deb DeBare proposed that going forward the Coalition would be more specific in their training descriptions and that the possibility of noting the hours credited toward ongoing training requirements as set by the Comprehensive Standards would be discussed. Both Shelley and Deb DeBare agreed the matter warranted further discussion and that the proper forum for that discussion would be at the Review Subcommittee meetings.

Shelley asked the Committee to consider if the trainings outlined in the letter submitted by Bridgemark exhibit a good faith effort by the program to come into compliance with regard to the required training hours and asked for the Committee to vote on an extension of Comprehensive Certification of Bridgemark until the April 2nd Oversight Committee Meeting.

Deb DeBare made a motion to grant an extension of Comprehensive Certification to Bridgemark until the BIPSOC meeting on 4-2-2012. Judge Bucci seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed; Mary Osborne abstained. Motion carried.

### **Member Issues/Announcements**

Anthony Ward-Smith of Justice Assistance discussed the agency's drop in domestic violence cases in recent months. Due to the large reduction in domestic violence case filings received by Justice

**Assistance in Providence County the agency decided to look into the data regarding the number of domestic violence cases arraigned in the Providence District Court and the outcome of those cases. The finding of the data collected was that 64% of the domestic violence cases arraigned in the Providence District Court were dismissed.**

**Judge Bucci stated the dismissals of cases are at the prosecutions discretion and that many cases are dismissed due to the prosecution being unable to have a victim present to testify.**

**Diane stated the Attorney General's Office, in addition to subpoenas to testify, reaches out to victims through letters and phone calls but there are still many times no contact is made due to the victim moving or not responding. Diane stated though the number of dismissals is high she believes it is accurate. Deb DeBare stated according to Coalition numbers the statewide percentage of dismissals has been stable within recent years. Deb states the police departments do not always make a concerted effort to find victims to testify in domestic violence cases. Judge Bucci said in Providence it is very difficult because the victims are transient. Elaine Dorazio stated departments she has spoken with state they don't have the time to track down all domestic violence victims. Deb DeBare stated continued training of police departments with regard to domestic violence and the importance of victim testimony is imperative in reducing the number of dismissals. Deb noted that all Rhode Island police departments, with exception of the Providence police department, volunteer to participate in RI-VAWA DV/SA Law Enforcement Trainings.**

**Ingrid stated that not only do victims not appear in court to testify against domestic violence offenders that when victims do come to the court they are, more often than not, requesting the no contact order be vacated and charges not be continued. And although a victim can not drop charges against the offender a way to have the charges not go forward and no contact order dropped is to not appear to testify so the case will be dismissed.**

**Shelley stated the reasons for dismissals of domestic violence charges and the possible solutions have no quick answers but that it is beneficial to have an ongoing conversation with all concerned parties.**

### **Upcoming Meetings**

#### **Review Subcommittee:**

**Thursday March 1, 2012 at 2:00pm in Dix Building, Cranston, RI.**

#### **DV Critical Cases Review Team:**

**TBD**

#### **Oversight Committee:**

**April 2, 2012 at 2:00pm in Dix Building 2nd Floor Conference Room, 18 Wilma Schesler Lane, Cranston, RI 02920.**

## **Meeting Adjourned**

**Deb DeBare made a motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**Judge Bucci seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. Motion carried.**

**Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Emily Daniels, Probation & Parole Officer**

**Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee**