

The Children's Cabinet

Monday, July 25, 2016

DOA Conference Room A

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Approved 8/29/16

Members in Attendance: Elizabeth Roberts, Chair; Ken Wagner, Vice Chair; Michael DiBiase; Melba Depena; Rebecca Boss; Jennifer Griffith. **Absent:** The Honorable Gina Raimondo; Jamia McDonald; Nicole Alexander Scott, MD; Scott Jensen; Jim Purcell.

❖ Call to Order and Agenda Overview:

Secretary Roberts called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for attending. Unfortunately, Director Alexander Scott and Director McDonald are out of town, and Director Jensen and Commissioner Purcell have been called to a meeting with the Governor this morning and are unable to join us.

Secretary Roberts stated that the minutes from the June 27th meeting will be carried forward to the next Children's Cabinet meeting for approval.

First, we'll hear from Director DePena regarding the status of our Universal Benefits Eligibility System, otherwise known as UHIP or RI Bridges, which is starting a pilot project today. The focus of this project is how to transform and simplify how we serve our clients and connect them through a one-stop with all of the possible programs they could be eligible for. This project is a complex project and she thanked all of the staff as well as the contractors involved.

Commissioner Wagner will give us an update regarding new policy and program initiatives at RIDE that align with our strategic priorities related to academic and career readiness. And finally, we will hear from Marti Rosenberg, who is serving as project lead for our state-wide health care innovation project. Marti and the SIM team have just developed a statewide population health plan. Secretary Roberts turned the meeting over to Director DePena.

❖ Universal Benefits Eligibility System Presentation

Director DePena thanked the Secretary and also introduced George Bowen, Associate Director who is working closely with DHS staff and Deloitte. Director DePena stated she and George will give an overview of the timeline of the project and share the current customer experience and the future customer experience. Director DePena stated that she is very excited as she just came in from the Pawtucket office which is the site of their pilot that was kicked off today, and expected to go live in September. It may not be perfect when it goes live in September, and that is why we want as many of you to be aware of the changes that are being made so that if anything goes wrong there is a direct communication to assist families through the process.

Eligibility System Timeline

- In October of 2013, states were requested to implement the Affordable Care Act. Rhode Island along with other states, decided to build its own exchange, and HealthSourceRI was launched.
- In January of 2014, customers could apply for human services programs online, however, the technology did not support the integration.
- In September of 2016, the new integrated system with the entire array of programs will be launched, enhancing customer access and improving staff effectiveness. HealthSource RI will be enhanced with many features that are coming into play, and we will have one system that integrates everything, which will enhance the level of customer service for them to apply and check their benefits online.

Director DePena stated that they are not relying on the new system to solve all our problems, a lot of time has been spent cross-training DHS staff to be sure they understood the system would now have one worker that would be able to do any of the programs as well.

Director DiBiase asked if the new online feature was previously a paper process.

Director DePena stated that yes, it was a paper process. There were three different systems currently being utilized to approve benefits, MMIS, InRhodes, and UHIP, however, the Legacy System was not integrated. Therefore, when people did apply online, none of these systems talked with each other, and paperwork still needed to be manually entered into each system.

Director Depena highlighted some of the current experiences and challenges customers go through, such as long wait times at local offices, crowded lobbies, multiple requests for the same documentation, interviewing with multiple case workers for different programs, waiting to hear if an application was received and if the benefits were approved, and not a one-stop operation.

Director Depena asked George Bowen to highlight the technical improvements that will be made.

George Bowen stated that some of the highlights of the new system include functionality for health insurance, SNAP, Medicaid, RI Works, state supplemental payments, child care, general public assistance and Medicaid premium payments. Everything that was on the Legacy System and more will be incorporated into the new system. The new system includes the ability to do pre-screening, checking benefits, file applications, renew benefits, upload documents, etc., all of which are in place today. The big change that will take effect in September is the inclusion of the front office functionality, an eligibility engine with the ability to generate notices and to combine notices so that multiple notices are not sent out to the customer. George reported that there will be data exchanges with state and federal partners, and task management feature where tasks automatically get generated upon documentation submitted. Another key highlight is the document management, where everything would be scanned to create electronic case files.

Director DePena highlighted the future benefits and experiences that the customers will experience, stating that the customer will be able to apply, renew and check the status of their benefits online as well as in person and over the phone. If a customer does need to come into the office because they do not have a computer, the DHS offices will have scanners available for the customer to use. The status of an application and benefit amount will also be available online to the customer 24/7. Director DePena asked George to give some highlights on the paperless process.

George Bowen highlighted the Electronic Document Management system which will allow the following:

- Receptionists will scan documents that customers bring to the office at check-in, allowing to build an electronic case file
- Customers will be able to upload documents from various devices
- Scanned documents will be stored electronically and immediately available to all DHS workers in any office within the state
- Original documents will be returned to customers
- All outgoing DHS mail will include a barcode
- Centralized mail facility will be established at the state data center so all incoming and outgoing mail will go through that facility.
- Ability to scan all undeliverable mail and upload into the system to generate a task for the worker to follow up and take the next steps.

George also highlighted the Hybrid Pilot which begins July 25th concluding August 31st, with the system going live on September 13th and open enrollment beginning on November 1st.

- Hybrid Pilot is the parallel testing of the current eligibility system (InRHODES) along with the new eligibility system (RI Bridges).

- Workers will process cases in InRHODES first, then process the same case in RI Bridges. Results will be compared and any discrepancies will be reported.
- It includes the Pawtucket Field Office, Hazard Building, State Data Center for Central Scanning, and the HSRI Contact Center.
- Target is to complete 2,200 total cases to simulate a go-live prior to the production date.
- Upon reviews and consultation with our federal partners, there was an agreement to extend testing and perform a hybrid pilot during the two month extension.

George also reported on extended testing and community involvement:

- Extended testing is the ability to continue to test code in parallel with Hybrid Pilot for functionality that wasn't needed for pilot. In addition, if issues are found during pilot, this will be included as part of the extended testing.
- Advocates and community partners have participated in various system demonstrations and road shows. DHS has scheduled three training sessions in August.

Director DePena reiterated that DHS will have three training sessions in August with advocates and community providers, each day will have three sessions totaling nine sessions altogether. Director DePena encouraged the providers in the room to sign up if they were not participants of the previous demonstrations and road shows, and distributed a sign-up sheet.

Director DePena closed her presentation by stating that DHS also needs the input and help from the providers and asked the following of them:

- Communicate DHS changes to your clients
- Encourage your clients to apply for benefits online
- Become a network agency
- Reach out to us with your feedback about our new integrated eligibility system:

DHS.ribridgesnews@dhs.ri.gov

www.dhs.ri.gov

Twitter: RIHumanServices

Facebook: Rhode Island Department of Human Services

Director DePena asked if there were any questions or comments.

Jessica Mowry from Rhode Island Housing, inquired as to whether any data is collected regarding housing needs, housing instability or threats to tenancy during their intake process.

Director DePena stated that they do not collect that data, however, when families come into the office to file their application during their initial intake interview, the customer does sometimes share that information with us, but it's not an official part of the process. With the RIWorks clients, they do go into an in-depth interview regarding domestic violence issues and housing issues, and DHS will work with them in that regard.

Anne Walsh youth programs manager for the Workforce Solutions of Providence-Cranston for youth programs, inquired as to whether there was a way to sign into the client's account and print out the proof that they are receiving benefits, for instance when clients are applying for summer programs or other programs, to show that the client is receiving benefits from DHS. It would really simplify the process on their end, if they could print that out at the time the client is there for the application process.

Director DePena stated that yes, a client will be able to access their account online and print that information out right there. However, it will only work if the individual has an online account with their email address and password.

Susan Pearlmutter from the School of Social Work asked whether there would be multiple languages available for the online application process and if they go in the office to complete an online application, whether there were staff there who could also assist if translation is needed.

Director DePena stated yes to both questions. The online system will be available in English, Spanish and Portuguese and all field offices will have interpreters and can help both with the paper application as well as the online process in the office.

Secretary Roberts thanked Director DePena and George Bowen for their presentation and asked Commissioner Wagner to give an update on the Department of Education policy updates.

❖ RIDE Policy Updates

Commissioner Wagner stated there are a number of things going on related to guidance from the Feds as well as a new law across the country related to school and district accountability. Compliance with that law is contingent on receiving federal title funds. RIDE will be going through an engagement process over the next year to develop a different type of accountability system that would be implemented starting in the 2017-2018 school year. Commissioner reported on the recent guidance related to transgender and gender non-conforming.

Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming - the recent guidance that RIDE put out related to best practices working with students who are transgender or gender non-conforming. This has been in the works for a period of time, but there was a lot of action at the federal level, both in terms of specific court cases, as well as the feds putting out a guidance document that summarized some of the court cases that have been ongoing. We did a crosswalk with the federal guidance to be sure everything was consistent. The guidance is to be helpful to school districts in sharing best practices around supporting the needs of the transgender and gender non-conforming students, as well as what is required not only by Rhode Island law but also by the federal guidance. Commissioner Wagner stated that students that are transgender, as a group, are one of the most highly target groups for various forms of bullying and/or physical violence. The data has been very clear, and we are trying to provide a coherent and consistent set of guidance that is ultimately focused on the students need to come to school feeling that they are in a safe learning environment.

There are a number of specific issues that have come to the forefront with transgender students that school districts may need help with, ranging from issues of usage names that may not match legal names, for example, the name they wish to use, may not match their legal name, so what should schools do in those situations. The other issue which is a big one that has prompted court cases, is how they handle the request to use public restrooms, where the sex assigned at birth does not match the gender identity of the student. Although there are still some court cases pending in this matter, the federal guidance is very clear that all public facilities need to be offered to the public aligned with the gender identity. Commissioner Wagner also stated that there is nothing in the federal or state guidance that is inconsistent with any student being offered enhanced privacy protections, so whether a student who is transgender or another student wants enhanced privacy protections, there is nothing that precludes school districts from offering those things, such as a separate changing room, or additional curtains to offer enhanced privacy. You can't force students to use those enhanced privacy protections, but any student who wants them should have access to them. The Department's guidance went out in the middle of June for the school districts to have an opportunity over the summer to do any additional professional development or training sessions with their staff.

Federal Accountability Law - the reauthorization of the Federal Accountability Law is to expand the kinds of things we focus on to better reflect the vision and values that we have for our schools, students, and our teachers. In the prior version of the Accountability Law, it was based on test scores and graduation rates, but the reality of what goes on in schools is much broader than that. Over the course of the next year, in culminating a new accountability plan, we will have a conversation as to whether we want to build in different incentives into the system.

Advanced Coursework - test scores, graduation rates and learning standards all become much more concrete when talking about advanced coursework for kids, but rigorous courses for kids is where the students thrive in the classroom with the teacher. Students having access to coursework that was previously only offered to advanced or accelerated kids, makes a huge difference for all kids. We don't know what kids can do until we challenge them

and then we support them. With the focus on advanced course work, whether it be Early College, CTE, Arts or Humanities, etc. we will be thinking about how to incentivize those types of advanced course experiences in high school and then what our middle schools and elementary schools have to do differently. We are also mindful of the resource constraints that may hold back school districts abilities to offer more advanced coursework, so we are putting forth partnering opportunities for school districts to partner with each other, public and private college/universities as well as non-profit organizations through an initiative called the Advanced Coursework Network. A school district could opt in to this network and offer courses in September for their kids who would not have been able to afford it in the past. It is overseen by a certified Rhode Island teacher, and the network can be done face to face, virtual, during the school day, after school, Saturdays, as well as in the summer.

College Readiness and Career Readiness - we have the opportunity to define the difference between College Readiness and Career Readiness, the two have always seemed to be combined as the same, however, they are not. One of the best pathways to a career is through college, but it's not the only pathway to a career, as people can go through the military or straight to the workforce. Commissioner Wagner stated that they had the chance to anchor the accountability system in a broader construct of Career Readiness in a way that opens up opportunities for students. We introduced through graduation requirements the construct of designations on the diploma, so a student doesn't need to pass a specific test to graduate, but we will have the ability to collect data on the percentage of students who do pass tests that demonstrate the level of minimal competency, literacy and numeracy. With that information we can build those data into our accountability system even though a student doesn't have to pass a test to graduate, by state laws, locals can set up that requirement. We can get data on the percentage of our student disaggregated by school, district, sub groups and all of those things we can use for test scores to see whether or not our system is making progress to help more students meet that minimum level of literacy and numeracy.

Climate and Culture - the missing link to technically proficient professionals and transformative schools is climate and culture. Happy kids do not always equate to learning kids, however, if our classrooms are gloomy places, we are never going to have transformative outcomes for our students, therefore we need to focus on our climate and culture in the classroom. Commissioner Wagner stated that they are in the midst of creating a climate and culture survey to be completed by students, families and teachers.

Absenteeism – there is not a better metric of engagement in our system than the percentage of our people who are absent an ordiant number of times. It becomes impactful when the kids miss too much school and the data shows it starts at the Kindergarten level. Some families may not think it's impactful for the kids to regularly attend. The absenteeism will not only be looked at for the children, but also for the teachers.

Vertical Articulation – we know it matters whether the elementary schools talk with middle and middle talk to high schools, but we don't do it more than a cursory way. When there's really planning for a K-12 progression of how the kids are moving through, brainstorming what's working or not working. By not having vertical articulation from early childhood into college, there is this dynamic where colleges blame high schools; high schools blame middle schools, etc. If we know vertical articulation matters, how can we incentivize those conversations?

District Accountability – Districts are experts who should be doing things to support schools. What are the districts doing to support high quality principals and the longevity of those principals? What are they doing to remove the low quality principals? What are they doing to recruit, retain and induct high quality teachers and promote longevity and what are they doing to remove teachers who are just not able to do the job. Also, what are the districts doing to promote fiscal awareness of the budget at the schools; and promoting growth and continuous improvement, and using evidence to inform decision making? These are all things districts should be doing to support schools and we are currently not measuring any of it. Commissioner Wagner stated that they will likely use traditional metrics over a period of a few years so they can be monitored that they are valid and they work as intended.

Commissioner Wagner added that in the new Accountability Law there is the ability to consolidate all of the different federal title funds that currently exist which will give school districts more flexibility as to how those funds are used. The Department will now also have the ability to hold back title funds, and come up with an understanding, perhaps through a performance contract, that they would only hold back funds if the State could

accomplish something that they as a district could not necessarily accomplish as 36 different districts. For instance, a topic that has bubbled to the surface with a high degree of interest is Leadership Development. Lack of leadership development is the single biggest risk factor to moving our schools forward and districts know they all cannot do it on their own because leaders move from district to district which would warrant a statewide approach to leadership development.

Commissioner Wagner finished his update by stating that none of these items are complete, but they are on the table for discussion through an engagement process over the next year.

Director DiBiase asked Commissioner Wagner to speak briefly about the Governor's Empowerment Initiative that was enacted as part of the budget.

Commissioner Wagner stated that we did not get everything that we asked for around empowerment, but we now have a legislative framework that's voluntary for schools to say they want to study an issue of site based leadership and site based management, as well as the opportunity for statutory/regulatory flexibility. For example, if a school believes there is something that RIDE requires them to do, that they would like some flexibility to do differently while still being held accountable, they can do that through the empowerment plan which is approved locally. The Commissioner stated that an Empowerment Cohort has been convened for folks who want to think about doing those things differently.

Commissioner Wagner also stated that another item that did not get approved was the opportunity for families to have their children have more flexibility on where they attend school as opposed to their assigned school.

However, there were three use cases that did get more attention:

- 1) CTE Program – allowing students to attend any CTE program in the State.
- 2) Student Mobility – planning to meet with the three major school districts, Providence, Central Falls and Pawtucket, where the most address changes occur for students to discuss allowing students to remain in their school even with an address change.
- 3) Foster Care – the new federal accountability law requires additional protections on where a student attends school for students in foster care. They will work to preserve coherence in terms of the approach, because a student may be assigned to go to a different school based on a treatment team's recommendation.

Linda Katz of the Economic Progress Institute stated it was good news to see additional funding for the English Language Learning (ELL). Linda inquired as to how that is going to be monitored and how best practices will be implemented. She also inquired about the alternative learning program and the issue of the kids are not retained in their schools at age 16 and the schools need to develop an alternative learning plan for those kids. How does that factor into the discussions about accountability.

Commissioner Wagner stated in regard to the alternative learning provider piece, the law requires compulsory enrollment through age 18, but between 16 and 18, Superintendents can sign off on students to go into alternative learning programs. The Commissioner added that there is a gap and under resource of providers who serve over-aged, under credited students and that is one of the reasons the Youth Build Program was just approved through statutory language. Given that gap we need to come up with metrics that make sense and coherent system for programs that serve students who are over age and under credited.

Commissioner Wagner stated in regard to ELL funding, RIDE received one year of funding conditional upon finding a plausible measure that the funds are being used as intended. They have ELL regulations and an ELL tool kit that will be brought to the Board for approval in September. It's important we get it right because the legislature was clear that they would not extend the funding unless we can demonstrate our due diligence.

Susan Pearlmutter stated in regard to the accountability related to attendance/absenteeism, there are several national models that are being tried to look at students who are habitually tardy or absent and there are some very promising practices out there. Susan questioned whether RIDE is thinking about using those models.

Commissioner Wagner stated that right now they are shining a light on the issue of attendance on the student side and will also be looking at the attendance on the teacher side. If they do decide to go to the next level of building that into the accountability metric, either the metric that leads to the composite which is by decisions of consequence or just as a separate aspirational measure. The implementation of those best practices would be continued at the local level.

Patricia Flanagan stated that it would be important to her and other pediatricians to have the days missed at school in the most recent quarter added into the KidsNet database.

Commissioner Wagner stated that there is such a range of issues with the Accountability Law that he would welcome doing a smaller update on a regular basis with the group.

Secretary Roberts thanked Commissioner Wagner and asked Marti Rosenberg to give an update on the Rhode Island State Innovation Model (SIM) Population Health and Operational Plan.

❖ State Innovative Model Grant

Marti Rosenberg thanked the Secretary and Cabinet for having her there to brief them on the SIM work. Marti gave background on the State Innovative Model Grant:

- SIM is a payment reform grant – part of the Affordable Care Act
- Rhode Island has many payment reform initiatives in process, moving from volume to value
- SIM investment are aimed at building the capacity of people active in our healthcare system – providers and patients - to make these health system changes more effectively

SIM is also aimed at improving Rhode Island's Population Health, particularly in these areas:

- Chronic Illness:
 - Health Disease
 - Diabetes
 - Stroke
- Obesity
- Tobacco
- Behavioral Health:
 - Depression
 - Children with Emotional Disturbance
 - Serious Mental Illness
 - Opioid Use Disorders
- Maternal & Child Health

Marti stated that the SIM Leaders are a combination of a Steering Committee and an Interagency Team:

- **Steering Committee:**
 - Insurance carriers
 - Healthcare providers at all levels, including primary care providers, specialists, nurses, hospital systems, and others
 - Patient advocates and community organizations
- **Interagency Team:**
 - EOHHS, including Medicaid, Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals, Department of Children, Youth, and Families, and Department of Health
 - Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner
 - HealthSource RI

Marti discussed the SIM Strategies and the Investment Details:

SIM Strategies:

- Linking payments to value using Alternative Payment Models
- Investing in workforce and health information technology to support system transformation
- Engaging stakeholders in policy development
- Continuing to develop our Integrated Population Health Plan
- Aligning existing and new healthcare innovation initiatives with each other, to improve Population Health

A big part of SIM's work are the investments we are making in health system changes in Rhode Island. The three main areas: building the capacity of our healthcare workforce, with practice transformation; patient engagement; and building our data capacity and expertise. Marti stated that there is not the clearest connection between these investments and population health, there are some and they are building on those connections. When they were looking at what to talk to the feds about improving, they realized they needed another strategy, which is the Integration Alignment Strategy.

SIM Investment Details:

- Investing in RI's Provider Workforce/Practice Transformation
 - Focus on health care in the community, not just in doctors' offices
 - Invest in improving Rhode Island's Behavioral Health infrastructure for children and adults, within primary care practices and community mental health centers
 - Technology development and training for providers
 - Budget: \$7.1M
- Patient Empowerment
 - Ensure patients receive greatest value from payment reform
 - Maximally engage patients in positive health behaviors and self-advocacy
 - Create infrastructure to easily share advanced care directives
 - Budget: \$2.2M
- Increasing Data Capability and Expertise
 - Investments in three major technology systems to support the move to value-based care
 - Expanding the ability of providers and state agencies to use and share data effectively
 - Budget: \$5.3M

Marti defined Health and Population health.

Health: RI subscribes to the World Health Organization's definition of health: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Health is created where we live, learn, work, and play. (RI Integrated Population Health Plan)

Population Health: "the health of a population as measured by health status indicators and as influenced by social, economic, and physical environments, personal health practices, individual capacity and coping skills, human biology, early childhood development, and health services."

SIMS approach brings both traditional public health practice/research and health care delivery together to focus on the many interrelated factors that influence the health of population groups over the life course. It also identifies the barriers to optimal health, and facilitates the development and implementation of intersectoral policies/interventions to improve the health and well-being of population groups.

The SIM Integration and Alignment Project creates links between SIM Investments and improving Population Health. Focusing on aligning and integration agency work to achieve maximum collective impact to improve carefully chosen aspects of population health.

Marti gave an example of the Integration and Alignment project as it relates to Obesity. We know there are new regulations around early childhood movement in child care centers which is overseen by DCYF; there is the new recess law that RIDE is working on; there are projects in the Department of Health looking very carefully at obesity. Marti stated that OHIC which oversees insurance companies, their plans and their forms, and posed the question as to whether they could be looking at ways the insurance companies could be promoting exercise by paying for gym memberships, what could HealthSource RI do about the plans they sell on their website; and what is happening at BHDDH around behavioral health and are we looking at eating disorders in anyway. These are ways to take what is already happening throughout the community and figure out how to bring it together and maximize the impact of it through more attention, more connections, and having the conversations with everyone involved to leverage additional dollars and maximize the ability to have an impact.

Marti informed the providers of ways to get involved and help the SIM Team learn:

- What is your personal and organizational framework for understanding what prevents people from achieving their best health possible?
- What light can you shed -- experience, data, - on the barriers to individuals achieving their best health possible?
- Does your organization address any of these barriers? Systemically? Informally? In other ways?
- What should we know about your organization's goals, to involve it in our Integration & Alignment work?

Marti thanked the Secretary, the Cabinet as well as the providers participating at the meeting and offered to come out into the community and talk further about working together. Marti also shared that the SIM Team has been working on the mapping of the Children's Behavioral Health and have mapped what's happening in the communities. Marti said they are excited to be through the writing of the operational plan and working to the implementation.

Secretary Roberts emphasized that one of the most important things right now that they are looking at are the resources: federal grants; foundation resources that are already being programmed through our separate agencies and often entirely separately; as well as a big gap between some of our investments in behavioral health and other areas of health care. SIM is a good place for us to look at how we build some linkages and use resources much more effectively and there is some real opportunity there. Its adding resources but leveraging other investments that we have gotten through competitive grants and that we already program through state funding and that communities are investing through providers. The Secretary announced that the SIM Steering Committee meets on the second Thursday of the month and it is open to the public if they are interested in attending.

❖ **Adjournment:**

Secretary Roberts stated the next Children's Cabinet meeting will be held on Monday, August 29th. Secretary Roberts informed the Cabinet and the public to reach out to Dacia Read if there were any items they would like to have discussed a the next meeting. The Secretary thanked everyone for attending. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.