

**Welfare to Wok Commission
Of the Suffolk County Legislature
Minutes of the July 8, 2011 Meeting**

Present: Richard Koubek, Chair; Kathy Liguori, Vice Chair; Peggy Boyd; Michael Stoltz; Barbara Egloff; Richard Krebs for Eric Lopez; Frederick Combs for Joan Grant; Debbie Joseph; Don Friedman; Roland Hampson; Nina Leonhardt; Timothy Rothang for Leg. Kate Browning; Jack Caffey; Michael Haynes

Excused: Frank Casiglia; Jeff Reynolds; Gwen Branch; Ellen Krakow; Bridget DePasquale; Rob Greenberger; Idania Aponte; Vinnie Cassidy

Guests: Dr. Edward Hernandez, SCDSS; Diane Galante, Child Care Council of Suffolk; John Nieves, SCDSS

1. **New Commission Member:** Chair Richard Koubek announced that Judy Kahn retired, and that Eastern Suffolk BOCES will now be represented by Barbara Egloff.
2. **Minutes:** Minutes of the May 13th meeting were adopted unanimously on a motion by Jack Caffey, seconded by Don Friedman, following insertion of an amendment by Mike Stoltz requiring other at risk clinics in addition to the Dolan Center as well as concern over future funding of all the clinics given changes in federal government policies. The June Commission meeting was cancelled due to conflict with the Commission's committee meetings.
3. **Sober Homes Oversight Board.** Jeff Reynolds and Kathy Liguori testified in support of the Sober Homes Oversight Board resolution at the Legislature's Health and Human Services Committee (HHS) on June 16th. Rick Brand wrote a supportive column about the resolution in *Newsday*.
 - a. At the HHS Committee meeting the resolution was tabled because the Suffolk County Commissioner of Health, Dr. James Tomarkin, stated that he was unclear about his agency's role under the resolution. Richard Koubek reported that the complication appears to be that Suffolk County Department of Health (SCDOH) and SCDSS have to work out their respective responsibilities.
 - b. Dr. Edward Hernandez, Deputy SCDSS Commissioner provided this additional information: SCDSS received four valid responses to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and are in contract development with the agencies interested in opening an approved sober home. The negotiations should be complete by the end of the summer.
 - c. The outstanding question that remains is who will do the monitoring of sober homes? SCDSS will respond to complaints and make sure the sites meet appropriate health and safety standards, but will not do ongoing monitoring of recovery. SCDOH says it does not have the staff to do that function. SCDSS and SCDOH officials met on these differences which remain unresolved. SCDSS is now waiting for a response from SCDOH to their latest communication.
 - d. Dr. Hernandez also noted that in California, volunteers do the inspecting, but he questions the legality of that in NYS. Richard Koubek pointed out that he thought

members of the Oversight Board, properly deputized and supervised by SCDSS, could conduct the site-visit inspections.

- e. Michael Stoltz suggested that the Commission might play a role in breaking the impasse. It was agreed that he, Richard Koubek, Jeff Reynolds and Peggy Boyd would attempt to meet with Art Fleischer, SCDOH Director of Community Mental Health Services, in an effort to break the deadlock.
4. **Child Care Committee:** Chair Kathy Liguori reported on the PCAN – Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect -- training program conducted by the Child Care Council of Suffolk at the suggestion of the Committee and SCDSS. PCAN is training for child-care providers to sensitize them to the signs of child abuse. One special piece in the training addresses cultural sensitivity.
- a. Ms. Liguori noted that it takes 17.5 hours to investigate Child Protective Services (CPS) reports and that 70% of the reports are unfounded. With the training of child-care providers, it is not clear that the number of the CPS reports will go down, they may even increase, but the quality of the reports should improve considerably.
 - b. Ms. Liguori reviewed the Committee's proposal for a CPS/PCAN training to follow the successful spring training that was funded by one-time federal ARRA stimulus monies. She distributed a chart showing that 58% of the 2010 SCDSS/CPS reports came from 18 zip codes in 13 County legislative districts. The Committee is proposing a second round of trainings in the legislative districts with the highest numbers of reports, funded by member-item grants that will total \$100,000 to cover the second PCAN training.
 - c. Diane Galante from the Child Care Council of Suffolk responded to a question from Mike Stoltz by noting that PCAN is working on a Spanish version, since they realize they need linguistic sensitivity as part of the training. In answer to a question from Peggy Boyd, Ms. Galante stated that she believes PCAN is too intense to incorporate this training into the ongoing training that is regularly offered to SCDSS/CPS workers. PCAN is an eight-part training, each session being two hours. The CPS/PCAN training offered four of the eight modules, geared toward improving communication between child-care providers and SCDSS/CPS. Ms. Boyd suggested that County workers who receive the reports should also be trained, but Ms. Liguori said, according to the representative of the SCDSS Division of Family and Children's Services, these workers already get ongoing CPS training.
 - d. Diane Galante also noted that the proposal envisions eventually offering the 87 child-care provider participants in the original 2011 training an opportunity to take the four other modules which will encourage them to become community resources and keep the dialogue going between each other and SCDSS/CPS. Ms. Galante reported that preliminary analyses of the evaluations submitted by the 87 participants showed a dramatic increase in their knowledge base about child abuse and neglect. There also was a follow-up session at which SCDSS/CPS staff answered questions submitted by the participants. Ms. Liguori mentioned that at the end of that particular follow-up session the CPS staff member commented that she had benefitted from the session as she had a new and different perspective with regard to the role child care providers have in caring for children. The collaboration was very positive. In assessing the number of reports that originated from child-care providers, it was noted that

providers sometimes make reports, but a very large percentage of reports are done anonymously so as not to undermine their relationship with the families.

- e. Ms. Liguori reviewed the PCAN initiative goals and stated that the Committee hopes to present the proposal at the HHS Committee meeting on August 11th. There was a discussion of why the decision was made to fund this through member item grants. Ms. Liguori responded that neither SCDSS nor the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OFCS) has available funding streams, and no more federal ARRA stimulus money exists. She pointed out and agrees that Legislator Browning would prefer that the CPS/PCAN proposal cover all legislative districts.
 - f. Tim Rothang, Legislator Browning's aide, said now is the time to seek funding from legislators. The point was made that the Commission can stress how this funding for the CPS/PCAN training is money that comes back to the community in benefits such as reductions in child abuse and neglect, improved CPS reporting and improved communication between child-care providers, families and SCDSS/CPS. Peggy Boyd raised the issue of the proper role of the Welfare to Work Commission in informing the Legislature about a significant problem, and possibly serving as a valuable resource in that the Commission is not seeking funding for itself.
 - g. Richard Koubek stated that this proposal is similar to the mentoring pilot that the Legislature funded about five years ago which led to a permanent line-item program in the Suffolk Community College budget.
 - h. There ensued an extensive discussion about the question of whether member items was the best way to fund the CPS/PCAN training proposal. First, that method requires, according to the original plan, 10 different legislators to contribute member item grants. A number of Commission members stated that since CPS reports are a County-wide issue, it would be better to seek general County funding. There seemed to be strong support for the proposal being offered County-wide funding .
 - i. Richard Koubek moved a resolution to support the concept of providing training pursuant to the CPS/PCAN proposal, with the details of funding to follow a meeting with Legislator Browning. Jack Caffey seconded the motion, and it was approved 11 Yes, 0 No with two abstentions (Roland Hampson and Richard Krebs.) [Note: The amended PCAN proposal is appended below]
5. **Suffolk County Health Clinics:** Tim Rothang reported that negotiations are still going on between the State and the County regarding \$19.5 "clawback" funds that the State is claiming against the County. It now seems hopeful that a substantial portion of the funds will be returned to the County. Legislator Browning introduced a resolution, which passed, in the Legislature, to have health-center cuts distributed equitably among all centers in the County. But it has now become clear that the centers can't manage if the required cuts are more than 10%, so it is crucial to determine how much of the "clawback" funds will be returned by the State. The newly-created Health Center Commission will be meeting on July 12th. A number of Suffolk County legislative resolutions addressing these issues were passed in the Legislature (including creation of the Health Center Commission) as well as an allocation of \$300,000 each for the Dolan and Elsie Owens Centers. It remains to be seen whether the County Executive will sign this latter resolution.
6. **Sunday Bus Service:** Richard Koubek reported that Sunday service for the East End service began this past Sunday pursuant to a resolution by Legislator Jay Schneiderman. Legislator Schneider informed Mr. Koubek that he hopes to move a resolution providing Sunday service

for the rest of the County in the fall. Legislator Schneiderman is working with the Department of Public Works on other options as well, including “thinning,” in which there might be fewer buses running various routes, but more routes would be offered at different times of day to accommodate peak riderships.

7. **Employment Assessment Committee:** Chair Rob Greenberger could not be present at today’s meeting but submitted a report. The *Did You Know?* flyer for people with disabilities is in its final revision. There are a number of minor issues that remain to be resolved. Also, using as a template some policies from upstate counties, Roland Hampson is working on a SCDSS Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policy. There are also on-going discussions between Don Friedman and Roland about State policy on public assistance and people who lack GEDs or basic literacy, and how it is implemented in Suffolk. Nina Leonhardt and Mr. Hampson are working on having Suffolk County Community College (SCCC) serve as work sites for public assistance recipients trying to attend the college. This policy has been in effect, but SCDSS is increasingly open to facilitating work activities on campus to enable the recipients to go to school while meeting work obligations.
8. **Federal Debt Ceiling:** Don Friedman presented on the federal debt ceiling issue.
 - a. In the past, it has been routine for Congress to raise the debt ceiling so that the U.S. can borrow sufficient funds to meet its ongoing obligations. But the Republicans in Congress are now demanding sweeping spending cuts as a condition of raising the debt ceiling. And many are adamant that the reduction of the federal debt must be accomplished solely through spending cuts and no new taxes.
 - b. A sense of the magnitude of the cuts being demanded can be secured by looking at the budget that passed the House of Representatives after being reported out of the Budget Committee chaired by Paul Ryan. It included \$4.2 trillion in net tax cuts; \$2.17 trillion in spending cuts for Medicaid and other health care programs; and \$350 billion in cuts to various supports for low-income families, such as SNAP (Food Stamps), SSI, TANF and Pell grants.
 - c. The current stalemate features a bloc of Republicans who will vote against any measure that has any new tax revenues (some even will vote no on any measure that doesn’t include a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution), and a bloc of Democrats who will vote against any measure that includes cuts to Medicare, Medicaid or Social Security.
 - d. For those concerned about potentially devastating cuts to safety net programs, the message that perhaps needs to be conveyed is that Democrats and the President must take a stand against this one sided approach to reducing the deficit.
 - e. Mr. Friedman made note of the Restore the American Promise Campaign, which is led by a number of unions, senior advocacy groups and other progressive advocates and which is organizing a statewide effort that will climax with rallies around the state on July 20-21. In addition, the Coalition for Human Needs in D.C. is circulating a letter from the Children’s Leadership Council describing steps individuals can undertake, including letter writing and contacting their local Congressional representatives.
9. **Next Meeting:** Friday, August 12th, 9:30 AM, SCDOL One Stop Center.

**The Suffolk County PCAN Training Initiative:
Enriching Child Care, Protecting Children, Strengthening Families**

A Proposal by the Child Care Committee of the Welfare to Work Commission of the Suffolk County Legislature

In March, 2011, the monthly intake of Child Protective Services reports at the Suffolk County Department of Social Services reached a new record: 1052 reports. **Suffolk County has the highest rate of Child Protective Services new intake reports in New York State outside of two boroughs in New York City.** The Child Care Committee of the Welfare to Work Commission has met throughout the past two years to discuss ways to improve communication within the child-care provider community and Suffolk County Department of Social Services/Child Protective Services (SCDSS/CPS) to reduce the likelihood of maltreatment and to better serve children and families. One very positive outcome of these discussions, as recommended by the Child Care Committee and SCDSS, was the spring, 2011 PCAN child-abuse awareness training for 87 child-care providers offered by the Child Care Council of Suffolk using one-time State pass-through federal ARRA stimulus funds. The success of this initial training led to **this proposal for a second round of PCAN trainings** which could serve as a New York State model to foster the recommendation made by the Every Child Matters Education Fund 2010 report, *We Can Do Better: Child Abuse and Neglect Deaths in America*, that "a public education campaign" be conducted "to encourage reporting of child abuse and neglect, and to enlist communities in the protection of children."

The Problem: In 2010, SCDSS/CPS received 9,744 reports of child abuse involving 12,865 children. Approximately 30% of child protective reports were determined by CPS staff to be founded for "some credible evidence" substantiating the reported allegations of child abuse and neglect; **70% of the reports were "unfounded" meaning there was insufficient evidence that abuse had occurred.** Some of these "unfounded" CPS determinations were due to errors made by those who filed the reports (e.g., misinterpreting what appeared to be abuse or neglect, misunderstanding cultural cues, etc.) while others might later become "indicated" or substantiated reports when additional evidence surfaced.

While any person may make a report of suspected child abuse or maltreatment, NYS Law requires certain persons to report as soon as they suspect that a child has been abused or maltreated. Mandated reporters are required to report child abuse and maltreatment which they encounter in the practice of their professions. These include child-care center workers and providers of family or group family child care who need to be trained to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect.

Of all the 12,865 subject children reported to CPS in 2010, 4,362 (34%) were ages 0-5, the age group most often served by child-care providers. There are about 1,000 registered child-care providers in Suffolk County. The overall goal of providing PCAN training is to help child-care

providers prevent child abuse and neglect within this age group and to promote better identification and reporting of such abuse and neglect.

The PCAN Training: PCAN (Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect) is a nationally-recognized, eight part training designed to prevent child abuse and neglect. The first Suffolk PCAN training focused on four PCAN modules to improve child-care provider competencies in dealing with potential or actual child-abuse situations by:

- Helping them empower families who are facing difficulties such as untreated depression or divorce or unemployment with the resources and on-going supports needed to cope with their problems.
- Creating collaborative, non-judgmental relationships between child-care providers and families that decrease child-abuse risks, increase protections of children and ultimately strengthen the families.
- Identifying for child-care providers certain cultural factors that may foster child abuse, or give the appearance of child abuse.
- Helping providers identify the signs of child abuse as well as steps that can be taken in situations where child abuse is suspected.
- Identifying for child-care providers the roles and actions required of them as State-mandated reporters of child abuse.

The PCAN Initiative Goals: Evaluations of the initial 2011 PCAN training show that almost all the child-care providers who attended significantly increased their knowledge base about child abuse from “low” to “high” levels of understanding. Building on this success, the *Suffolk County PCAN Training Initiative* will offer a **second round of PCAN trainings to:**

1. **Educate child-care providers** on strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect.
2. **Improve the knowledge of child-care providers to know when to make a child protective report and to improve the content of the report.**

The PCAN Proposal: The cost of the PCAN training is \$85 a module or \$340 for the four 3 hour modules. Each PCAN class should have a maximum enrollment of 30. Thus, each four-module training for 30 would cost \$10,200. The *Suffolk County PCAN Training Initiative* will **seek \$100,000 divided evenly among the Suffolk County Legislature, SCDSS and the New York State Office of Family and Children’s Services** to fund:

- **(8) sessions of the four-module PCAN training for 30 child-care providers each (240 providers)** who did not attend the 2011 trainings.
- **(2) sessions of the remaining four PCAN modules for 60 of those providers who attended the 2011 series to strengthen their emerging network** of trained providers while enhancing their collaborative relationship with SCDSS/CPS staff.

CPS Reports by Legislative District

Below are the child-abuse reports by zip code ("rept's") in Suffolk County legislative districts and the number of registered child-care providers ("cc") in each legislative district **in descending order of reports**, noting that legislators share some zip codes*:

Legislator	2010 Child Abuse Reports from District	# of Childcare Providers in District
Browning	1671	199
Barraga	1175	114
Montano	978	155
Horsley	889	62
Muratore	745	48
Romaine	588	53
Kennedy	548	81
Gregory	476	60
Cooper	426	38
Fisher	408	30
Schniederman	382	36
Anker	300	27
Lindsay	250	30
Nowick	245	35
Stern	149	28
D'Amaro	62	32
Cilmi	25	25
Eddington	11	11

*Note: The complete summary of CPS reports is attached.