

Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group Meeting Minutes – 02.20.18

The eighth meeting of the Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group (SSWG), a live webinar presentation, was hosted online by the University of North Carolina School of Government (UNC SOG) on February 20, 2018.

Working Group Members Attending Live Webinar Remotely

Susan Osborne, Social Services Director, Alamance County
Angie Stephenson, Orange and Chatham Counties
Hon. Robert Stiehl, Chief District Court Judge, Cumberland County
Glenn Osborne, Social Services Director, Wilson County
Hon. Kevin Austin, Commissioner, Yadkin County
Susan Perry-Manning, Deputy Secretary for Human Services, DHHS
Chris Dobbins, Consolidated Human Services Director, Gaston County
Sen. Kathy Harrington
Sen. Tamara Barringer, co-chair
Michael Becketts, Assistant Secretary for Human Services, DHHS
Hon. Bob Woodard, Commissioner Dare County
Hon. Brenda Howerton, Commissioner, Durham County
Rep. Sarah Stevens, co-chair
Lisa Cauley, Chief, Child Welfare Section of the Division of Social Services, DHHS

Working Group Members Not in Attendance at Live Webinar

Rep. Jonathan Jordan
Rep. David Lewis
Hon. Page Lemel, Commissioner, Transylvania County
Sen. Joyce Krawiec

Convene

- Welcoming remarks by A. Wall
- Minutes from the January 30th and February 8th SSWG meetings were adopted without change; all were in favor
- Review of meeting purpose and agenda by A. Wall
 - The overview of public feedback and review of the homework assignment will provide SSWG members with the necessary context and framework to facilitate discussions and activities planned for the February 27th SSWG meeting.

Overview of Public Feedback on Proposed Maps

- Presentation by A. Wall on feedback received by the SSWG regarding maps that were recently made available to the public for comment; accompanying PowerPoint slides can be found at <https://www.sog.unc.edu/resources/microsites/social-services>.
- The map proposals were made available to the public on February 5th, 2018.
- Feedback was received by a number of county representatives (e.g., DSS director, county manager, commissioner) as well as representatives from Fort Bragg, the National Association of Social Workers—North Carolina Chapter, Councils of Government, the Children’s Home Society of North Carolina, and the North Carolina Partnership to Address Adult Abuse.
- Feedback regarding the number of regions:
 - 10 commenters preferred Map 1 (five regions), including 8 county representatives
 - 23 commenters preferred Map 2 (seven regions), including 18 county representatives
 - Some commenters advocated for more regions to allow for increased connection between regional staff and counties and shorter distances
 - Some supported fewer/larger regions because they would have more resources, staff and expertise
- Positive Feedback:
 - Regarding Map 1 (five regions): Fewer regions mean a more efficient use of resources, less drain on the central office; better for military and tribal communities
 - Regarding Map 2 (seven regions): Fewer counties per region means better support for county departments and shorter travel distances.
- Negative Feedback:
 - Not aligned with regional system for contracts with private child welfare agencies
 - Alignment with judicial districts over-identifies regional supervision with protective services; not relevant for economic services
 - Should align with
 - COGs/AAAs
 - Metropolitan Statistical Areas
 - LME/MCOs
 - Should be based on the number of people served in each region, not total population
 - Should be based on travel time, not geographical size
- General comments:
 - Regions need high-quality staff
 - Regions need adequate funding
 - Premature because important systems are in flux (e.g., judicial districts, Medicaid reform)

- Should partner with COGs because of existing infrastructure and experience
- Specific suggestions:
 - Should not separate Durham and Wake and judicial districts 6 and 7
 - Should not separate Cumberland, Harnett, Moore, Hoke into three regions because of military presence
 - Should move Surry to western region (MCO alignment)
- Comments/responses by SSWG members to the presentation on public feedback:
 - A DSS director recently pointed out that the Medicaid Transformation map has 6 regions [this may be another possible alignment to consider]
 - It is important to note that the majority of comments reflected the desire for more regions in order to maximize support to the counties – respondents are equating smaller regions with stronger support
 - This point is consistent with other messages that were conveyed to SSWG members
 - It is clear from the comments received that there is no “one size fits all” solution to the mapping challenge.
- A summary report of the feedback as well as copies of the emails/letters received by the SSWG can be found at <https://www.sog.unc.edu/resources/microsites/social-services/materials>.

Preparation for Next Meeting

- In preparation for the next SSWG meeting scheduled for February 27th, members were provided a 3-part homework assignment to review and complete in the interim.
- An overview of the assignment and its purpose was provided by M. Henderson.
 - Review of SSWG charge, specifically the need to identify “options for authorizing the board of county commissioners to intervene in urgent situations to assume direct control of the department of social services at the local level prior to the state assuming direct control of service deliver pursuant to G.S. 108A-74”
 - Recommendations made by SSWG can work upstream from the point at which the state assumes control of local operations and can involve stakeholders in addition to the board of county commissioners (i.e. DSS staff or director, DSS board, county managers, etc.)
 - The purpose of this homework assignment is to develop possible intervention strategies for recommendation.
 - Assignment #1: Identify challenges or concerns that make local governance and oversight less than ideal.
 - Think broadly in terms of stakeholders involved in local governance.
 - Consider challenges that originate inside or outside the organization.
 - Consider personal experiences or first-hand accounts when identifying challenges or concerns
 - Assignment #2: Consider the whole timeline of creation, oversight, and intervention. Propose strategies for intervention that will strengthen outcomes.
 - Take challenges or concerns identified in assignment one and develop strategies that might address them.

- Strategies can involve the BOCC or additional stakeholders and may exist at any stage: during agency formation, throughout the agency's ongoing oversight, at the time of initial non-compliance, after an extended period of non-compliance, or at the time an agency fails to complete the corrective action plan.
- Assignment #3: Double-check to consider whether the proposed intervention strategies identified in Assignment #2 actually address the challenges or concerns identified in Assignment #1.
 - How does this strategy strengthen local governance and oversight?
 - What are ripple effects, if any, of the proposed strategy?
 - How would the strategy play out in another community, where the challenge is something or somewhere different?
- SSWG members were provided a handout detailing Assignments 1, 2 and 3. A copy of the handout can be found at <https://www.sog.unc.edu/resources/microsites/social-services/materials>.

Updates and Plans

- Upcoming SSWG meeting dates, times, and agenda items were reviewed; no objections were raised by SSWG members.
- SSWG members were encouraged to continue collecting feedback regarding map proposals from interested stakeholders and directing them to the sswg@sog.unc.edu email address.