

December 2003---October 31, 2004
Report of the Child Abuse Action Network and
the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Panel

THE CHILD ABUSE ACTION NETWORK is the entity designated by the Governor to receive Children's Justice Act funding, has functioned cooperatively with the Department and with the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service since 1989. The Network's mission is to establish policies and programs designated to improve a) the handling of child abuse and neglect cases in a manner that limits trauma to children; b) the handling of suspected child abuse or neglect-related fatalities; and, c) the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases.

To that end, and pursuant to its by-laws, the Network has established a Steering Committee and several standing committees. The standing committees address training, coordination and systems issues, quality assurance and professional standards and protocols. The Network is broad-based and multidisciplinary, and includes but is not limited to individuals from the categories outlined in the Children's Justice Act.

The Child Abuse Action Network is unique in that it focuses primarily on addressing the needs of professionals working in various disciplines. By undertaking a host of activities in past years, the Network has enhanced the knowledge, skills and collaboration of professionals in Maine who intervene in child abuse and neglect cases, as a specific approach to meeting grant requirements. The network has been very effective in creating an improved system for child protection in Maine, utilizing its multidisciplinary approach.

THE CHILD DEATH AND SERIOUS INJURY REVIEW PANEL'S mission is to provide multidisciplinary, comprehensive case review of child fatalities and serious injuries to children in order to promote prevention, to improve present systems and to foster education to both professionals and the general public. Furthermore, the panel strives to collect facts and to provide opinion and articulate them in a fashion that promotes change. The final mission of the Panel is to serve as a citizen review panel for the Department of Human Services as required by the federal Child Abuse and Treatment Act, P.L. 93-247.

The Maine Child Death and Serious Injury Review Panel is comprised of representatives from many different disciplines. Its composition, which is mandated by state law, includes the following disciplines: Judiciary, Forensic Pathology, Forensic and Community Mental Health, Pediatrics, Family Practice, Nursing, Public health, Civil and Criminal Law, Law Enforcement and Public Child Welfare. Doctoral Candidates completing their clinical or field practice regularly participate in these case reviews as part of their education and training.

There are several unique functions of the Panel. Most states only review child fatalities; Maine's panel reviews serious child abuse and neglect injuries, as well as abuse and neglect fatalities, or suspicious deaths. Some states have multiple local review panels in addition to a state-level panel. In such cases only selected cases are reviewed. Because the state of Maine is less populous than other such states, all cases are reviewed by the full, central state-level team. The centralized forensic medical examiner system and representation on the panel promotes standardized forensic child death investigations and post mortem exams. The State of Maine has specialized medical examiner training for child death investigation units of law enforcement, which include Maine State Police, Bangor and Portland Police Departments. Representatives from this training sit on the panel. The Panel is established by a state statute that permits confidentiality of Panel's work and grants the Panel with the power to subpoena relevant case documentation and testimony. This latter feature allows the panel to conduct in-depth retrospective reviews of all relevant records, supplemented by oral presentations by key, involved service providers. Finally, the Maine Child Death and Serious Injury Review Panel belongs to the consortium of Northern New England Child Fatality Review Teams. More recently, the Maine Child Death and Serious Injury Review team has become associated with all the New England state teams through the National MCH Center for Child Death Review,

Goal 1:

To provide staff support to Network and Child Death and Serious Injury Review Panel members to assist in carrying out on-going professional work training and demonstration projects.

Objective 1:

Provide monthly and ongoing support staff for CAAN and Child Death and Serious Injury Review Panel. This has been accomplished by providing the Network and the Panel with two full-time staff; a coordinator and an administrative assistant.

Outputs:

- Minutes of monthly Child Abuse Action Network meetings
- An active dialogue with CAAN and CD&SI panel members through phone contact and e-mails.
- Executive summaries for each child death or serious injury case that is reviewed by the Child Death and Serious Injury Review panel.
- Annuals Child Death and Serious Injury report
- Organization of meetings, conferences and planning retreats.
- Obtaining and organizing materials for the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Panel.
- Invitation to guests to the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Panel.

Goal 2:

To enhance multidisciplinary collaboration between agencies which are responsible, in some measure, for issues pertaining to child welfare in the state of Maine.

Objective 1:

To support current partnerships between state departments, such as in the following projects: a subcommittee of CAAN reporting to the legislature on ILD1855, Part C: *Research and Report Regarding Potential Offenders* by January 30, 2005.

Output:

- A subcommittee has been developed and three meetings held to research and work on a report for the legislature. CAAN is working in conjunction with Sue Righthand and Sean Faircloth.

Goal 3:

To enhance the availability of child maltreatment information and resources.

Objective 1:

Prepare and Publish up to 2 issues of “*Child Abuse and Neglect: Maine Health Perspectives*” professional newsletter.

Output:

- CAAN has produced 2 high quality newsletters(3,200 copies) since Spring 2004. The format has been changed, photos added and up-to-date information included. A third newsletter is being worked on at this time and should be completed by the end of 2004.

Objective 2:

Provide on-going management support for the CAAN website. Providing up to date training information, newsletter and treatment directory information.

Output:

- The CAAN website has been developed into a high quality state of the art website. Many inquiries come from this website each week and it is continually being upgraded.

Objective 3:

Continue efforts to integrate state of the art assessment and treatment skills among Maine mental health clinicians and other service providers,

Output:

- The *Selected Topics in Assessing and Treating Complex children* has been printed and distribution has begun. The guide is based on information presented by subject matter during the 2002 training series of the same name.

Objective 4:

Undertake a 2 year initiative to address the challenging issue of Child Neglect.

Output:

- A conference on Child Neglect was held in Portland in Maine 2004. Many disciplines were represented. See chart below.

Discipline	Number in Attendance
Advocacy	6
Agency	37
Dept. of Health and Human Services	28
Education	14
Family Violence	2
Health	11
Judicial	4
Law Enforcement	5
Mental Health	7

Objective 5:

CAAN will encourage the Department’s use of the 2003 report of the Child Death and Serious Injury Review panel to inform legislative, Departmental procedures and collaborative multidisciplinary work on behalf of maltreated children.

Output:

- The 2003 report was completed and in September 2004 was approved by the Commissioner.

Objective 6:

CAAN will explore new ways to be active in the community and to encourage multidisciplinary work.

Output:

- CAAN sponsored a retreat in September 2004 to look at CAAN historically and to make some decisions regarding direction and activities. See attached summary on page 6.

Goal 4:

To explore issues pertaining to child protection, especially with regard to child fatalities

Objective 1:

CD&SI panel will explore the possibility of co-sponsoring a child fatality conference with the other two northern New England states. The panel will collaborate with New England states to develop projects and policies that will be beneficial to all New England States.

Outputs:

- 6 Representatives met with New Hampshire and Vermont teams on October 1, 2004 to review a case and make recommendations for policy.
- One representative met with the 8 New England States on November 5, 2004.

Child Abuse Action Network - September 04 Retreat Summary
October 15, 2004 - draft

Historical Highlights

Common Highpoint themes of
Multidisciplinary Work

Reaching Proposition

What if we reached the
proposition. How would we
get there?

1980s CSAT created to increase
visibility of the effects of child
abuse and to explore how we
could do a better job responding
and preventing child sexual abuse

Take advantage of pockets of
excellence

Children in the custody of
DHHS have positive meaningful
connection with family and
community and are loved.

Do work on LD 1855... Include an
overall recommendation re: the
need to address the reaching
propositions with the larger
stakeholder group

Meetings became annual to
involve all partners in knowledge
development, planning and
strategic development of system
improvements

Improvements are research -based

Secure Deputy Commissioner
Hall's participation in this endeavor

1990s narrowed focus with
Criminal Justice Act to work with
professionals to increase their skill
to respond to child sexual abuse

Inclusion of partners in planning and
strategic development

Children found to be in jeopardy
of child abuse or neglect shall
receive child protection services
even if other services are being
provided.

Start ongoing forum of broad
stakeholders on reaching the
propositions. Use foundational
values workshop as base.

Need innovative funding relationships,
staff development and dollars

Balance with prevention

Connect to trends of the day:
Resiliency, Strengths, Family