Attendees:

Council Members: Secretary Ted Dallas, Janet Hartge, Wendy Lane (for Scott Krugman), Richard Paulman, Pam Brown, Al Zachik, Angela Vaughn-Lee, John McGinnis, Jim Trent, Melissa Rock, Cathy Surace, Claudia Remington, Sandra Barnes, Tracy Watkins-Tribbitt, Aaronette Carter (for Vanita Taylor)

DHR Staff: ML Wenecke, Carnitra White, Shanda Crowder, Steve Berry, Debbie Ramelmeier, Adrea Turner, Elyn Jones

Other Attendees: Dr. Carol Spigner (facilitator), Mary Myslewicz, Kai Guterman, Shelley Tinney, Christi Megna, Hope Gary, Debbie Marini, Jacqueline Winton, Terry Shaw, Jeanne Marks, Michelle Workman

Welcome and Introductions

The Advisory Council for Alternative Response (AR) meeting opened with welcoming remarks from the Department of Human Resources Secretary Ted Dallas and introductions of AR council members.

In his opening remarks, Secretary Dallas stated that the AR advisory council will guide the planning and implementation of an Alternative Response program at the Department of Human Resources (DHR). This process will require a great deal of thought and engagement, and this will be a working Council.

Secretary Dallas introduced the Council facilitator, Dr. Carol Spigner. Dr. Spigner is a recognized expert in the field of child welfare. Dr. Spigner retired from the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice in 2010 after having served as Associate Professor for a decade. Prior to moving to Pennsylvania, Dr. Spigner was a resident of Maryland for 10 years. Previously, she was the Associate Commissioner of the Children’s Bureau at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Children and Families. Dr. Spigner’s participation is made possible through Casey Family Programs.
Review of History and Authorizing Legislation

Secretary Dallas provided a brief overview of authorizing legislation. House Bill 834/Chapter 397, signed into law by the Governor in May, allows DHR to implement an Alternative Response System in Maryland for lower risk reports of child abuse and neglect. This legislation, which was in the works for six years, allows DHR to approach child welfare cases in a manner that recognizes that one-size does not fit all. The legislation also created the Advisory Council and named specific responsibilities of the Council.

The Executive Director for Social Services Carnitra White spoke briefly regarding the Alternative Response Case process as well as the Investigation Case process.

**Question:** In the Alternative Response process, will the child be interviewed separately?

*Answer:* This process calls for engaging the entire family first instead of interviewing the child separately, so the family will be willing participants in the process. We have to deviate away from the current process.

**Questions:** What about Family referral services?

*Answer:* If a family needs TANF and/or Day Care, the Department will refer the customer to TANF and/or Day Care for services.

**Question:** When will we implement this?

*Answer:* We will implement in June 2013.

**Question:** How will the process interface with Voluntary Placements for individuals with disabilities?

*Answer:* Voluntary Placement requests will be processed according to the current process, which is outside of the Child Protective Services system.

Alternative Response White Paper

Secretary Dallas introduced Casey Family Programs consultants Mary Myslewicz and Kai Guterman who discussed their white paper entitled *Alternative Response: Essential Considerations for Implementation* [June 2012]. They elaborated on Casey’s Mission to include consulting, public
policy, work with states across country, and specific work on child welfare issues, such as the implementation of AR. The white paper includes information organized around the topical areas for the Council workgroups, experiences of other states in implementation of AR, and a five page matrix, as well as resources and web links. This paper is not intended to be exhaustive, but to introduce concepts and information. Also, footnotes have been included in the white paper to help with the process.

**Council Schedule and Workgroup Structure**

Council Facilitator Dr. Spigner discussed the Council schedule and workgroup structures, charge, deliverables and assignments. These workgroups are to make recommendations, crosswalk with Casey’s white paper to delineate process implementation, and follow the implementation schedule.

**Question: What is CHESSIE?**

*Answer: Children Electronic Social Services Information Exchange*

**Question: What are the training strategies for staffing design, mix caseload, caseload ratio and communication?**

*Answer: The Practice workgroup will make recommendations for LDSS staffing design (specialized AR workers or not), caseload size and communication targeted for partners and stakeholders. SSA has a training contract with UMSSW Training Academy and will target training for CPS (AR and traditional), In-Home and Out-of-Home staff as well as those partners who work hand-in-hand with CPS including law enforcement, the schools and hospital/medical providers.*

The Evaluation Workgroup was built into legislation that encompasses the timelines and evaluation process. This group is charged with writing the scope and outcome evaluations. The evaluations are critical as to what success looks like, outcomes, and process measures building blocks.

Additionally, the Community Resources Workgroup will help to develop resource plans in the community that can be networked within the community for collaboration. Furthermore, this group will identify key partners, hold informal meetings, and obtain feedback from the community.
Question: Are there parents represented on the Council?

Answer: Yes, Angela Vaughn-Lee from Maryland Family Coalition is representing parents on the Council.

The timelines are fast and approaching, so look at end dates.

Questions and Closing Discussion

Question: Who will develop regulations?

Answer: DHR staff will write for public comments, which is an open process and negotiable.

All information will be posted to the web site below that all AR members will be able to access.

Lastly, two youth were selected as participants to engage with the Workgroups.

Next Meeting: Second Tuesday, August 14 “An opportunity to connect the dots”

The meeting adjourned into workgroup sessions.