

# **CONNECTICUT YOUTH VISION TEAM**

***”Creating a collaborative, sustainable, and performance-based system that prepares Connecticut’s most at-risk youth for success in education, in the global demand-driven economy, in their families and in their communities”***

## **Session Notes**

**January 19, 2007**

**Hartford, CT**

**Connecticut Youth Vision Team  
January 19, 2007  
MDC Training Center, Hartford**

**OPENING & INTRODUCTIONS**

**Participants:**

Judi Andrews	SDE
Carl Buzzelli	DOL
Donna Cambria	DCF
Richard Chavez	USDOL
Barry Goff	Charter Oak Group
Janice Gruendel	Governor's Office, Office for Workforce Competitiveness
Maria Dynia	United Way of CT
Dianne Harnad	DMHAS
Jan Hasenjager	DOL/Job Corps
Doug Hall	CT Voices for Children/Jim Casey Initiative
David Johnston	Casey Family Services
Charles Kinard	DCF
Carl Paternostro	SDE
Susan Quinlan	Families in Crisis, Inc.
Agnes Quinones	SDE
Julie Revaz	CSSD
Enid Rey	Mayor's Office of Youth Services, Hartford
Nikki Richer	DMHAS
Cynthia Rutledge	DCF
Kim Sharpe	DOC
Malia Sieve	United Way of CT
Jill Spinetti	GPP
Jon Swift	Office for Workforce Competitiveness
Eileen Telgarsky	Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board
Robin Nadeau	School & Main Institute, Inc. (Facilitator)

**PROTOTYPE WORK GROUP: Update**

**Program Operations Status Check:**

- 50% enrolled; looking to identify additional participants
- Met with COO of New Haven Public Schools, Robin Golden; NHPS will help find partners.
- Follow-up is happening; DCYF and the school system will identify programs in the school system where foster care children could be integrated.
- Legislation to raise age of entry into adult criminal justice system is focus of Juvenile Jurisdiction Planning & Implementation Committee.
- Rep. Toni Walker called agencies together in New Haven to discuss how to work more closely together and connect with CSSD program efforts. CSSD and other agencies need to build on educational and vocational support; New Haven seems like a logical place due to the various initiatives there. Rep. Walker's group can be a focal point for the prototype program's community contacts. The intent of the group is not only to share information, but also to create a vision.
- RFP for research and evaluation is in process in DCF and will go out in near future. This project can provide outcomes-based research to inform future program efforts.

**Database Update:**

- Workforce Alliance offered a technical person to build the database for the prototype, using the WIB's database as a foundation and modifying it. As work progressed, it developed that the new database itself could be a model for statewide replication.

- Database can help meet the need to know, within a structured environment: how many are showing up; the effort the program is expending; what the average is across all young people and families; the amount of time spent in each activity area; other information that is helpful for case management and program management.
- Business practices were developed with Marrakech (how to put consistent information into the system through correct data entry procedures).
- Training was conducted with case managers.
- Making final modifications now, then database will be ready for program implementation. Workforce Alliance staff have been very helpful.
- Judi Andrews suggested showing the database to the YVT, and Barry Goff will do a demo presentation at a future meeting.

## SYSTEMS WORK GROUP: Update

### Dec 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting Update:

Janice Gruendel presented a document she had developed, giving an overview of various data-related initiatives being pursued in CT. There is a need to find a core of common elements across the various youth-serving agencies. She described her document as a first step, a compendium of initiatives that reflects many investments and illustrates the need to cut across them through better integration of data systems. Dr. Gruendel asked the agency reps to review the document, check the descriptions of their initiatives, and to let her know if any information was missing or wrong. She summarized by saying the basic problem is not technology, but policies, turf issues, and other impediments to effective data-sharing.

### 3 Key Reasons for Research & Paper:

- 1. Client Service:** Need to get past human challenges to create a different system of client services for youth, working in real time, extracting and sharing data.
- 2. Program Evaluation:** Program management and evaluation can be automated, working with performance measures.
- 3. Public Policy and various forms of data:** Aggregate data for use on public policy issues. Plus, long-term, looking at increased funding in order to serve youth.

Now we have the technical capacity to look at children (driven from Department of Public Health) Assign unique identifier at birth, track children longitudinally from birth to age 21. Need to link SDE's PSIS with DOL and DPH.

This connects with the RBA process (policy- and outcomes-related questions on budget, demographics of workforce).

### SEVEN POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS (see paper for more details. Suggestion that YVT choose 1-2 of these to focus on):

1. Continue to scan similar work in other places
2. Complete compendium of data infrastructure and interoperability initiatives
3. Examine existing data agreements that currently exist between state agencies
4. Identify (a) core set of data indicators used to evaluate youth outcomes (b) common youth-related definitions and terminology across agencies and link with RBA.
5. Data Advisory Group: Determine if one exists now and if not, explore its feasibility.
6. Identify joint professional development opportunities
7. Secure financial resources for continued technology architecture that allows existing databases to communicate with each other in real time. (Pilot: testing one model health/education/ workforce)

In New Haven and Hartford, there are groups of kids not being served well. Possibility of piloting a data project targeting a population of kids reading below grade level.

E-Health CT: (private & public sector) -- Private health sector coming together with state, led by CT Economic Development Authority

**Overall Challenges:**

- a. Lots of data and databases are not currently talking to one another
- b. Sharing of information is limited
- c. Client identifiers are not systematic
- d. Accuracy and reliability of current data are questionable
- e. Disparate hardware/software packages

**General Opportunities:**

- a. Utilizing MOUs
- b. Use existing data agreements
- c. RBA (Results-Based Accountability) framework
- d. Changing demographics
- e. Utilizing private sector knowledge and advances

Paul DiLorenzo, a national consultant with expertise in youth issues who has worked closely with the JCYOI initiative in CT, spoke on information systems. He has worked with multiple systems and has familiarity with some of the problems relating to information gaps. Mr. DiLorenzo said that there are two levels at which information systems are important: policy and practice. He emphasized the fact that case managers need good information, as do policy-makers. He supported Dr. Gruendel's point that technical tools are secondary to a consensus on principles, vision, and mission, and warned against letting technology be the driver.

Mr. DiLorenzo then introduced Prashant Kumar and Raghu Nathan from Integrating Factors, a Princeton-based technology consulting firm. They have done impressive work with several agencies in the city of Philadelphia on developing a system for cross-program service coordination, info sharing, and data analysis for policy and research. In Philadelphia, there was a need to break out of "silos" of case information, but rather than trying to create a single huge data system, they used new technologies to connect existing IT systems and create an integrated system for case management, policy, and research. It isn't necessary to try to integrate everything, but rather to enable agency data systems to "live together" and inform each other.

On the practice side, their system involves pulling client data and content, verifying and applying confidentiality rules, and delivering information to achieve informed intervention/prevention and situational awareness for caseworkers and providers. On the policy side, they collect data and organize it to deliver info and measure performance to provide policy guidance and social insight.

All in all, this was a very impressive looking system, particularly with its ability to inform the practice or case management level of client services. Another appealing feature of the IF work is that it is possible to take a phased approach and scale up, based on prioritizing what is important.

Dr. Gruendel then introduced Dr. Rob Aseltine from the UConn Health Center, where they have developed a Connecticut Health Information Network (CHIN), a broad, population-focused initiative creating a federated or distributed data network. He stated a basic problem existing in CT as "tons of data, very little info." State agencies collect and maintain huge amounts of data, but none of their databases can talk to each other.

Some of the key challenges to addressing this problem are:

- Security/Privacy concerns (HIPAA, FERPA, WIC, Soc. Sec., Medicaid/Medicare regs, state statutes)
- Alteration/disruption of business practices
- Unique identification of individuals/cases
- Accuracy & reliability of data
- Disparate hardware/software platforms

CHIN is a federated data network that does several things:

- Allows shared access to data from heterogeneous databases
- Allows agencies to retain control over access to data
- Has minimal impact on business practices
- Complies with security/privacy statutes
- Incorporates cutting-edge approaches to case matching

Partners in CHIN include DCF, DMR, SDE, DPH, DOIT, UConn

Steps (simplified) in system include:

- Data mapping & transport
- Query building
- Identifier matching & data merging
- Data de-identification
- Data utilization

Benefits:

- Comprehensive assessment of target populations
- Development of evidence-based practices
- Mechanism for achieving RBA
- Vehicle to articulate agency needs/priorities

UConn is in the process of completing MOUs with various agencies (they already have them with DCF & DMR).

Dr. Aseltine thinks the key federal agencies will approve of the CHIN approach, based on indications to date (they have refused to approve several other similar efforts by other states).

### **Other Data-Related Developments:**

The work of the YVT's SWG has dovetailed with some other comparable efforts. One is the Transition Task Force project in BRS, funded by NGA and including a resource mapping effort that has been described to the YVT earlier. In late September, the consultants for that project presented their draft report. One thing that was clear from that document was the same problem that Dr. Aseltine described as "tons of data, very little info." There was a list of the various databases used by the state's human service agencies, and documentation of the lack of communication or capacity for info-sharing.

At that meeting, staff from BRS, UW, and OWC got into a discussion of a possible effort to address this problem. Shortly thereafter there was another meeting at BRS to talk about what might be done. The upshot was a meeting at OWC at which Mary Ann Hanley and Brenda Moore (BRS Director) agreed that it would be appropriate for OWC to facilitate an inter-agency effort. An MOA was drawn up and the two agencies entered into an agreement to pursue this.

On January 12, an inter-agency meeting was held to present some of these ideas and get agency input and suggestions. Dr. Aseltine and the Integrating Factors reps came back and made their presentations to that group, and Mike Meotti from UW facilitated a good discussion. Staff from the key agencies will be meeting again soon to continue mapping out next steps to pursue this effort.

Dr. Gruendel noted that the ECE Cabinet has been working with leadership from business, philanthropy, and higher education through the ECE Research and Policy Council. That Council has made a proposal for a \$102 million investment to ensure that kids enter kindergarten ready for school. Part of that proposal included \$6 million for data interoperability. She suggested the possibility of the ECE Cabinet partnering with the YVT around data infrastructure/data-sharing efforts.

Mr. Swift and Dr. Gruendel both suggested that if there were some way for the CHIN and Integrating Factors efforts to combine the best features of both, that would be ideal. Neither system is complete, but if they could be put together it could be a powerful combination.

There was some discussion of a possible collaboration between the ECE Cabinet and the YVT to plan a data-related forum for later in the spring, but no concrete decisions were reached. (See "Wrap-Up" on p. 7)

## **YOUTH VOICE**

The original purpose was to develop a plan for youth involvement at the next meeting of the YVT. However, participants now questioned whether "youth voice" would be achieved by bringing youth into a YVT meeting. This was discussed more deeply by those present.

### What/Why use youth?

- 1) **To get anecdotal data on youth needs and understand issues** that affect youth
- 2) **To review proposals – give feedback**
- 3) **To conduct advocacy work** with legislature: ex. Plan Youth Day at Capital

### Considerations in working with and involving youth:

- Logistics
- Stipends
- Staffing
- Leading

### What's In It for Them?

- Job Skills
- Need to make it real
- Lose the jargon

### Who are they?

- Mix of kids
- (and if they come to a meeting, they need a chance to process before the meeting)

### Various avenues were brainstormed:

1. Invite to this meeting with pre-work
2. Go to existing youth boards
3. Create our own YVT Youth Board
4. See what information exists now in your agencies, examine that
5. Consider forming a 3<sup>rd</sup> work group on youth involvement/voice

6. Utilize young people in current concrete local work (e.g., evaluation team in New Haven)

*After this initial discussion, participants talked about how specifically the YVT could achieve youth voice, since it was now leaning towards something different than having a group of youth attend a YVT meeting.*

### **YVT: Statewide Youth Voice**

#### **PROPOSED ACTION:**

1. Inventory where youth voice is now happening at the local level  
Examine opportunities to grow and connect (Hartford and New Haven)
2. Look at opportunities to speak with youth in Hartford and New Haven

#### **To what end?**

1. To inform what YVT is doing in its prototype work (systems), use geographic areas for logistical purposes
2. (Lessons Learned): Identify what various youth are already saying about their needs, aggregate in our two communities (Hartford and New Haven)

**ACTION: David & Doug:** *Collect what exists (map this information). Engage our groups. Then figure out if want to use other existing groups (actual kids)*

#### **Target Population:**

Seek out individual youth that meet parameters of target population  
At-risk and vulnerable youth: Start with WIA-eligible youth and Youth Futures.  
Kim Sharpe invited YVT members to visit Manson CI, talk with inmates

#### **Question for later point:**

With regards to value: How to measure this? What is done with this information and what is translated into action?

### **WRAP-UP: Immediate Next Steps and Next Meeting**

The group discussed the possibility of holding some sort of an event, possibly in late spring, to present ideas relating to data integration to a broader audience. This topic will be explored further as the situation develops.

#### **NEXT MEETING:**

**March 30, 2007  
9:00 AM – 11:30 AM**

**\*\* note new location\*\***

**The Lyceum Conference Center  
227 Lawrence Street, Hartford**