

# North Carolina Citizen Review Panel

## 2010 Annual Report and Recommendations

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Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina

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**Prevent Child Abuse**  
North Carolina

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To ensure that North Carolina was in compliance with requirements for Citizen Review Panels of the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), the NC Division of Social Services contracted with Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina (PCANC) to develop recommendations for a new system and to have this process serve as the activities of the Citizen Review Panels for the state fiscal year 2009-2010.

To accomplish this, PCANC in partnership with NC DSS and various stakeholders:

1. Conducted an external scan of the federal CAPTA policies (and their interpretation at the federal and state levels), research literature on review panels, and current structures and impact of Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) in other states.
2. Conducted an assessment of existing resources in North Carolina that have played a role or could play a role in a Citizen Review Panel structure, including the state's Child Fatality Prevention System, the Community Child Protection Teams, and others.
3. Developed a Citizen Review Panel Advisory Committee comprised of state and local level stakeholders to help guide this initiative, review findings, and develop the final recommendations to the NC Division of Social Services for the implementation of CRPs starting State fiscal year 2011.
4. Developed a set of goals and outcomes for NC's CRPs, and proposed a new CRP structure (including staffing, training needs, costs, etc.) for the Division to consider based upon these findings through a facilitated conversation of the Advisory Committee.
5. Produced the federally required CRP report as evidenced by this document.

Through this process, the following core recommendations were made:

- The creation of five regional Citizen Review Panels comprised of users of the system, leaders of the community, and professional involved in service delivery to be staffed by an independent entity with a proven track-record in statewide policy work. These should coincide with the State's Regional DSS training regions with one modification. Regions are anchored by the following counties:
  - ✓ Buncombe
  - ✓ Mecklenburg
  - ✓ Guilford
  - ✓ Cumberland and
  - ✓ Pitt (this was modified from Lenoir).
- The activities of the CRPs should include:
  - Review policies and procedures in consultation with county and state child welfare staff to ensure the protection of children and in compliance with NC's CAPTA plan.
  - Review the consistency of practice and compliance with stated policies.
  - Work with the Child Fatality Prevention System (State Team, Local Teams and Community Child Protection Teams) to ascertain recommendations based upon their data and findings.
  - Analyze trends, provide valuable insights that those working within the system may miss, and provide feedback on what is or is not working.
  - Recommend policy changes and work with other entities as appropriate, to ensure implementation and follow-through.
  - Advocate for needed resources to serve children and families, including prevention of child maltreatment and the treatment of children from the sequelae of abuse and neglect.
  - Increase community understanding, ownership and investment in child welfare and family strengthening.
  - Promote cooperation among community resources and child welfare services.
  - Prepare a public annual report containing a summary of the activities of the panel with recommendations to improve the child welfare system and keep children safe from abuse and

neglect. In addition to submitting the annual public report to the Division of Social Services, the CRPs should also share the report and the response from the Division with the Governor and other members of the executive branch, members of the legislatures, the various bodies/task forces and advocacy organizations. (It should be noted that in order to be in full compliance with CAPTA, the Division must respond to this report in writing no later than six months after its receipt.)

- Each year the Panels should establish their work plan and measures for success.
- The State should contract with an independent organization with a history of policy work and advocacy as well as a demonstrated ability to move a policy agenda forward, a supporting organization, to support the work of the Citizen Review Panels.
- The supporting organization in partnership with the central “Steering Committee” (comprised of representatives of the regional Citizen Review Panels) should carry out the core responsibilities including staffing of the CRPs, coordination, data analyses, report writing and advocacy.
- Potential members of the CRPs should possess certain characteristics that include influential (loud and vocal), passion about children’s issues, team-oriented and analytical. Furthermore all candidates must make a commitment to attend the four meetings per year and perhaps review material throughout the year.
- The panel composition should be comprised of 51% community members, consumers and /or individuals who are not currently human services professionals and no more than 49% professionals working in either the private or public service systems. In addition, panel membership should be reflective of the region (racial, social and economic) and a balance of rural and urban.
- Explore the development of a statute requiring the implementation of these regional Citizen Review Panels. The statute should not include a fiscal note and would include the requirement that this process be staffed by an independent entity that met the criteria laid out above.
- Decide upon a name that could be readily accepted by all integral partners and more effectively describe the work of the panels.

This report reflects the work of the Advisory Committee. Throughout this process, minutes were shared with members and used as the basis of this report. Upon completion of the draft report, inclusive of the appendices, the report was shared with the committee for their review and feedback. Feedback and edits were incorporated into this final draft.

## INTRODUCTION

To understand the evolution and implementation of the Citizen Review Panel process in NC it was important to review their development to date. The following is the history of how we are here today.

In 1991, a series of child abuse fatalities, a high infant mortality rate, and other preventable child deaths prompted the state of North Carolina to create a program that would assist in determining how to prevent childhood deaths. The result was the North Carolina *Child Fatality Prevention System*, established under Article 14 of the Juvenile Code, NC General Statute's 7B-1400-1414. The goals of the System are to:

- Develop a community approach to the prevention of child abuse and neglect
- Understand and report the causes of child deaths
- Identify gaps in services to children and families
- Make and carryout recommendations for changes to laws, rules, and policies to prevent future child deaths, especially those from abuse and neglect.

The North Carolina Child Fatality Prevention System contains four components. These include the North Carolina Child Fatality Task Force, the state Child Fatality Prevention Team (State Team), the Community Child Protection Team (CCPT) and the Local Child Fatality Prevention Team (CFPTs). (See Chart 1 below.)

*The North Carolina Child Fatality Task Force (Task Force)* was established in 1991 and is the public policy arm of the Child Fatality Prevention System charged by statute with making recommendations to the General Assembly regarding laws, and policies that will lead to the prevention of child deaths as well as to promote the safety and well-being of North Carolina's children. The Task Force is a 35-member legislative study commission, with appointees including legislators and multi-agency membership. It has three working committees which study the following: 1) non-accidental deaths such as homicide and suicide; 2) infant mortality and women's health; and 3) accidental deaths, respectively. Subcommittees are formed to work on specific issues that require in-depth analysis on as needed basis. The Executive Director is based in the Division of Public Health.

*The State Child Fatality Prevention Team ("State Team")*, also established in 1991, is a multi-disciplinary group with statutorily required representation of state-level agencies that is charged by statute with several responsibilities, including reviewing all deaths of children under 18 years that are investigated by the NC Medical Examiner system. Through individual and aggregate reviews of all sudden and unexpected deaths, accidental deaths, suicides, homicides (including abuse and neglect), the State Team identifies issues and trends that impact child well-being across North Carolina. Based on this information and recommendations from the local CFPTs, the State Team makes recommendations to agencies and organizations including the Child Fatality Task Force to make improvements and to find possible solutions to prevent future child fatalities and improve the lives of North Carolina's children. The State Team produces an annual data report available to the public. The State Team staff is housed at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

*The Community Child Protection Teams (CCPT)* are interdisciplinary groups of community representatives inclusive of mandated representatives that were established in 1991 and further formalized and expanded in 1993. Located in all 100 counties, the CCPTs meet regularly, a minimum of four times per year, to promote a community-wide approach to the problem of child abuse and neglect. Each CCPT reviews active child welfare cases, fatalities, and other cases brought to the team for review. The purpose of the CCPT case reviews includes identifying gaps and deficiencies with the child protection system, increase public awareness of child protection in the community, advocate for system changes and improvements, assist the county director in protection of living children and develop strategies to

ameliorate child abuse and promote child well-being at a local and state level. The CCPT Coordinator is housed in the Division of Social Services.

*Local Child Fatality Prevention Teams (CFPT)* were established in 1993. Teams are located in each of North Carolina’s 100 counties and are charged with reviewing deaths of children within their own counties that are not known to be abuse/neglect related. Each local team is also composed of mandated representatives from among public and private child serving agencies. Child Fatality Prevention Teams identify local and state-wide system based impediments to child health and safety, make and carry out recommendations for local and state changes, and enhance the general awareness of child fatalities through the understanding of why and how children die. This information is provided to the local board of county commissioners and to the local board of health and the State Team. The state-level coordinator of the CFPTs is housed in the Division of Public Health.

## Current NC Child Fatality Prevention System

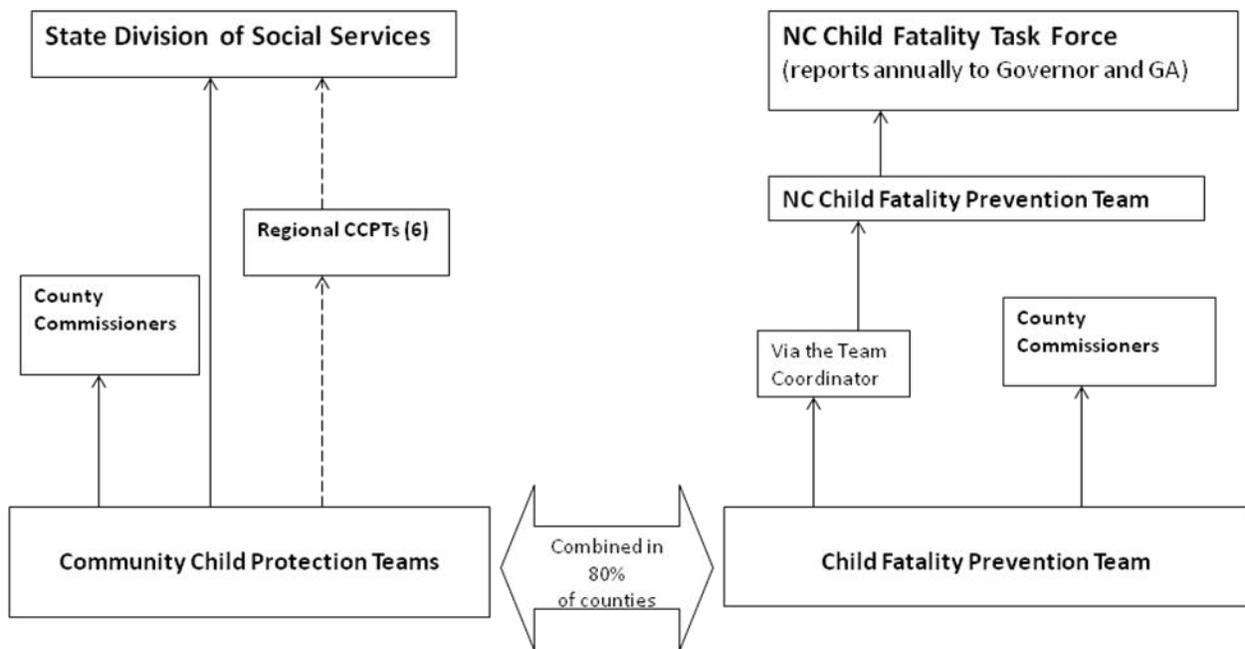


Chart 1: The Current Child Fatality Prevention System.

In 1974, the Child Abuse Prevent Treatment Act (CAPTA) was signed into law to guide states in carrying out their child protection efforts. During its most recent reauthorization, Keeping Children Safe Act of 2003, states were required to form Citizen Review Panels (CRPs). CRP’s are charged with evaluating the extent to which the state is effectively fulfilling its child protection responsibilities in accordance with the CAPTA State Plan, examining the practices (in addition to policies and procedures) of the state and local child welfare agencies, review child fatalities and near-fatalities and examining other criteria important to ensure the protection of children. Based on its work, CRPs develop annual reports inclusive of recommendations and make them available to the public.

In 1997 North Carolina designated CCPTs as the Citizen Review Panels to meet these requirements. However, in 2006, North Carolina was notified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), that North Carolina’s CCPTs were not in full

compliance with CAPTA requirement for CRP. In response, the State Division of Social Services developed “regional teams” to enhance the CCPT process and thereby comply with the CRP requirement of CAPTA.

Six regional teams composed of one member from each county CCPT and consumers were established by January 31, 2008. Regional teams 1-5 were based on geographical location with emphasis placed on judicial districts. Team 6a and 6b were composed of CCPT members and consumers from urban counties. This design recognized the fact that urban counties and non-urban counties often experience different levels of child welfare conditions or concerns. Teams were to be composed of one member of each county CCPTs and up to five parent consumers. Members would serve on these teams for a two-year period.

The regional teams were responsible for:

- Receiving information from local CCPTs about child welfare related issues including deficiencies in services and resources, inconsistencies in interagency collaboration, team activities that resulted in an improvement in condition related to children and families, etc. Information received from the county CCPTs was to be factored into final recommendations included in the Region’s end of year report.
- Receiving county CCPT end-of-year reports and developing one regional report based on county end-of-year reports and information received from teams throughout the year.
- Reviewing components of child welfare policy and identifying elements of the policy that do not adequately address the key concern of the policy.
- Addressing an area of concern through collaborative efforts with the expected result being an improvement of service delivery to families and children of the state. Examples of areas of concern are the disproportionate number of African-American children in the foster care system, the increasing number of females entering the foster care system, reducing school dropout rates, teen gangs, domestic violence, etc.
- Commenting on the Division of Social Services’ child welfare legislative agenda prior to public dissemination.
- Developing a CCPT agenda that could be included in the Division’s agenda, the Child Fatality Task Force agenda or as a separate agenda for legislative consideration.
- Receiving the State’s response to the recommendations in the CCPT end-of-year report and insuring that the response is forwarded to local CCPTs.
- Developing public forums providing citizens with the opportunity to express concerns and comment on the child welfare system in North Carolina.

Regional teams had no responsibility to receive or comment on county CCPT’s annual reports to the Board of County Commissioners.

The Regional Team/Citizen Review Panel process was operational for two years. After continued feedback from the field and the multiple stakeholders, the Division determined that a comprehensive assessment process of its current efforts to meet this federal mandate was necessary. To accomplish this process, the Division contracted with Prevent Child Abuse – North Carolina (PCANC) to lead the planning process for developing Citizen Review Panels in compliance with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. To accomplish this, PCANC agreed to:

- Conduct an external scan of the federal CAPTA policies (and their interpretation at the federal and state level), research literature on review panels, and current structures and impact of CRPs in other states.
- Conduct an assessment of existing resources in North Carolina that have been playing a role or could play a role in a Citizen Review Panel structure, including the state’s Child Fatality Prevention System, the Community Child Protection Teams, and others.

- Develop a Citizen Review Panel Advisory Committee that is comprised of state and local level stakeholders who will help guide this initiative, review findings, and develop the final recommendations to the NC Division of Social Services.
- Based upon the data collected above, develop a set of goals and outcomes for NC's CRPs, and propose a new CRP structure (including staffing, training needs, costs, etc.) for the Division to consider.
- Produce the federally required CRP report by June 15, 2010.

The following reflects the work of NC to assess its current system of citizen review and make recommendations for the future.

## ACTIVITIES

Prior the establishment of the Citizen Review Panel Advisory Committee, staff completed the following activities in preparation for the work of the Advisory Committee.

### Research:

*Review of literature and reports:* To ensure a complete understanding of the CAPTA requirements, staff at PCANC reviewed pertinent publications and information available including federal CAPTA legislation, Citizen Review Panels for the Child Protective System: Guidelines and Protocols<sup>1</sup>, research literature on both Citizen Review Panels and other pertinent review panels, articles on collaboration and volunteer boards, reports from other states and their respective websites, and publications regarding Child and Family Services Reviews.

*Key informant interviews at the federal level and with staff in other states:* To further the understanding of what was working in other states, staff conducted interviews with the Program Coordinator at the National Citizen Review Panel Virtual Community. To obtain a more in-depth understanding of CRP operations, staff contacted Program Coordinators/staff from states with similar administrative and operational systems, including Minnesota, New York, Wyoming, and Nevada.

The information gathered from research and key informant interviews was then synthesized and presented to the Advisory Committee. A summary follows:

### Structures used in other states:

A handout was developed that outlined the existing structures in states with comparable systems (See Appendix A for complete document). In summary:

- Most states were using existing bodies such as the state's child fatality team or the Children's Justice Act Advisory Committee (CJAAC).
- Most states have 3-5 panels.
- Some only serve finite localities (Minnesota has 5 county specific panels) and do not have statewide coverage.
- The majority of states are staffed by personnel at the state agency (DSS/DHHS) and do not feel that they have an independent voice.
- New York State employs a public policy organization. It had been housed at a university however; it was found that the university did not have systems or legislative policy experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Kot V; Bruner C; and Scott S (1998; Updated 2001) *Citizen Review Panels for the Child Protective System: Guidelines and Protocols*. Prevent Child Abuse America

- The budgets of those states employing external staff for the Citizen Review Panels ranged from \$100,000 – \$160,000<sup>2</sup>.

#### Lessons from other States

Research and conversations with other states have identified the following as critical components for successful CRPs:

- Clear mission and role
- Ongoing strategic planning process with clear goals and objectives that are time limited and focused
- Training for members
- Strong partnership with state and local child welfare system
  - ✓ Specific mechanism for communication
  - ✓ Liaison person to CRP
- Establish By-Laws that include how membership will be handled
  - ✓ Need diverse membership
  - ✓ Members are appointed in some states
- Financial Resources
  - ✓ Staff
  - ✓ Travel money for members
  - ✓ Training resources
- Specific process for the state to respond to recommendations

#### Citizen Review Panel Successes:

CRPs in other states have been successful in achieving the following:

- Changed foster care planning to be more youth and family centered - Minnesota
- Training and debriefing for staff involved in a fatality investigation as a way to prevent turnover and increase retention - Colorado
- Clarified definition of medical neglect - Virginia
- Supported the expansion of home visiting as a way to prevent child abuse and neglect - Virginia
- Developed standardized process for case worker transition - Wyoming
- Began a process to address racial disparities through technical assistance - New York
- Increase public awareness and understanding of the professional role of caseworkers in child welfare ... “caseworkers make a difference.” - New York

Assessment of existing resources in North Carolina: To get a more thorough understanding of the current status of the Citizen Review Panels in NC, staff reviewed recent reports; reviewed state legislation; met with staff of the Division of Social Services; had conversations with several directors of local Departments of Social Services (DSS); interviewed chairs of current local and regional CCPTs, staff and leaders associated with existing Child Fatality Prevention System, as well as various stakeholders as outlined in Appendix B including family and youth representatives. To ensure understanding and buy-in from the directors of the local DSS, staff made a presentation to the NC Association of County Directors of Social Services. The following is a summary of this research, all of which was shared with the Advisory Committee:

#### Assets of existing CCPTs:

- Coordination of training
- Facilitation of community day

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<sup>2</sup> These amounts are based on conversations with states that outsource the support of Citizen Review Panels including New York and Wyoming.

- Able to provide forum for community-wide discussion that has and can lead to changes in the community
- Community gains understanding of CPS processes and procedures
- Effective in filling gaps in the community
- Some CCPTs look at trend data and have members capable of making policy and practice decisions
- Intensive fatality reviews produce practice changes have impact on practice changes

Issues within existing CCPT process:

- Community felt it was “not heard” despite providing feedback on case review process and policy and practice
- No accountability for membership – no consequences if certain entities do not participate
- Sense that local departments control the process; community members do not share freely for fear that DSS will react
- Minimal “community/regular citizen” involvement

Issues with regional CCPTs:

- Not seen as value-added
- DSS overwhelms process
- Limited buy-in
- Lack of clarity regarding expectations of the team
- Resources needed to support the process
- Would want more input into the design process
- Mixture of regions – urban vs. rural. The larger counties did not like being separated from contiguous counties.
- Not taken seriously
- Not decision makers

General concerns regarding approach and needed elements to make it successful:

- The underlying construct might include a “continuous quality improvement approach” – small tests of change – what can be done by next Tuesday? Issue not an individual failure but rather system failure.
- Issue of transparency regarding how the panels are developed, their work and the communication between the panels and State DSS.
- Need to address the core question: how do we get citizens to the table/ how to ensure that membership is not the “usual suspects”?
- Issue of duplicative process: several entities already serving as oversight/advisory bodies (State Collaborative)
- The ideal situation would to get buy-in from the Governor, Secretary and the legislature.

Recommendations for future CRPs:

- Keep size manageable.
- Make them regional; makes travel easier.
- Participants should be active and represent all agencies; should be knowledgeable about CPS; ensure voice for different cultures/regions.
- Use technology for communication.
- Requires competent facilitation and leadership.
- Accountability and clarity of expectations.
- Think about the name and its framing – could be trigger for some (big brother watching over).
- Ensure that everyone understands the value of the process.
- Has to be developed as partnership between citizens, local agencies and State DSS.
- Think about incremental change and building trust.

- Purpose will define structure.
- Several regional CRP's – geographical – ensure Directors are involved.
- “Regional” automatically makes a system issue versus a personal one.

### **Development of Advisory Committee**

Based upon a scan of the existing groups of stakeholders, advocacy organizations and other groups that may have a vested interest ensuring a citizen voice regarding the implementation of the CAPTA plan and child welfare outcomes, a beginning list of potential Advisory Committee members was developed. These groups included: State and community child protection systems; Community Child Protection Teams/Regional Teams; members of the existing Child Fatality Prevention System; Guardians Ad-Litem; community-based agencies partnering with local departments of social services; mental health providers, family and youth representatives (including foster parents and youth in foster care); Courts; Child Advocacy Centers; Child Medical Evaluation Program; community advocates; civic leaders; university partners; philanthropic organizations; and other members of the medical community. A commitment was made to ensure that members of the Advisory Committee included geographic representation and were reflective of the socio-economic and racial make-up of the state. In addition to this initial list, as interviews were conducted, the question of who else should be at the table was asked and additional individuals were approached and added as appropriate.

Staff compiled a list of potential members and began conversing with individuals as previously identified. The final Advisory Committee was comprised of 43 members including youth and family members, were racially diverse and represented the various parts of the state. See Appendix C for complete list of members and their respective affiliation.

The **Advisory Committee** defined its scope of work and how it would operate. The following are the “underlying values and principles” by which the Committee agreed to conduct its work:

- No shame no blame
- Outcome driven
- Participation and expectations have to be practical; meetings are easily accessible
- Proactive orientation
- Attention to trends
- Focus on accountability
- Clear goals and expectations
- Connection between local and state
- Partnership between stakeholders; families/youth; public and private
- Infuse process with family driven voice
- Continuity of membership and participation
- Independent voice
- Position has to be effective advocate for change

It was also agreed that the Committee would recommend that the CRPs operate under these values and principles as well.

The Advisory Committee met three times over the course of three months. (See Appendix D for minutes of these meetings.) A significant component of the initial meeting was educational, providing an overview of the CAPTA legislation to understand the statutory requirements for Citizen Review Panels, the current NC Child Fatality Prevention System; review the scope of work; identifying other individuals/groups that need to be at the table to ensure that the process was inclusive. The remainder of the first meeting and the two subsequent meetings were spent on the scope of work as outlined below:

- Defining goals and objectives of the Panels.
- Determining the structure, number and composition of Citizen Review Panels.
- Determining how the Citizen Review Panels relate to the existing NC Child Fatality Prevention System.
- Deciding upon an organizational home for the Citizen Review Panels
- Developing a structure to provide needed staff support.
- Developing a strategy for recruiting and selecting members.
- Enacting enabling legislation and developing a budget to operate the panels.

## **Planning Outcomes**

### Defining Goals and Objectives

Over the course of two meetings the Committee developed mission and goal statements for the Citizen Review Panels and are as follows:

*The mission of NC's Citizen Review Panels is to promote/improve the safety, permanence and well-being for children and families in NC by assuring that children and families are provided the best possible services that include a comprehensive array of prevention through treatment within their community.*

#### Goals:

- Evaluate and assess the child welfare system within a quality improvement context.
- Promote quality child welfare practices.
- Promote and advocate for the provision of quality prevention services within the community.
- Advocate for the strengthening of resources.
- Educate and engage the community regarding the challenges facing children and families and in developing community-wide solutions.
- Recommend and advocate for policies and procedures that promote the highest practice standards.
- Engage in cross-system problem-solving involving both formal and informal support agencies, groups and individuals.
- Evaluate our effectiveness on annual basis.

To further clarify the role of the Citizen Review Panels, the Advisory Committee delineated specific activities that the panels would undertake including:

- Review policies and procedures in consultation with county and state child welfare staff to ensure the protection of children and in compliance with NC's CAPTA plan.
- Review the consistency of practice and compliance with stated policies.
- Work with the Child Fatality Prevention System (State Team, Local Teams and Community Child Protection Teams) to ascertain recommendations based upon their data and findings.
- Analyze trends, provide valuable insights that those working within the system may miss, and provide feedback on what is or is not working.
- Recommend policy changes and work with other entities as appropriate, to ensure implementation and follow-through.
- Advocate for needed resources to serve children and families, including prevention of child maltreatment and the treatment of children from the sequelae of abuse and neglect.
- Provide outside validation of the successes of the system and the efforts of the staff.
- Increase community understanding, ownership and investment in child welfare and family strengthening.
- Promote cooperation among community resources and child welfare services.

- Provide for public outreach and comment to assess the impact of procedures and policies upon children and families in the community.
- Prepare a public annual report containing a summary of the activities of the panel with recommendations to improve the child welfare system and keep children safe from abuse and neglect. In addition to submitting the annual public report to the Division of Social Services, the CRPs should also share the report and the response from the Division with the Governor and other members of the executive branch, members of the legislatures, the various bodies/task forces and advocacy organizations. (It should be noted that in order to be in full compliance with CAPTA, the Division must respond to this report in writing no later than six months after its receipt.)
- Monitor the extent to which the NCDSS is fulfilling child protection responsibilities in accordance with its Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Five-Year Plan, as required by the federal regulations.
- Each year the panels should establish their work plan and measures for success.

### Determining the Structure, Number and Composition of Citizen Review Panels

Upon lengthy discussion, the following were the core understandings regarding the proposed structure of the Citizen Review Panels in NC:

- The Citizen Review Panels would need to be supported by an independent organization outside DSS/DHHS.
- A central “Steering Committee” with support from the sponsoring organization would be needed. The Steering Committee would be comprised of representatives of the Citizen Review Panels. This Committee would oversee and support staff in following responsibilities:
  - ✓ Advocacy
  - ✓ Synthesis
  - ✓ Report writing
- The support organization should have the ability to influence the legislative process.
- State’s CAPTA’s funds would be used to underwrite the support organization. Participants anticipate that the budget would be approximately \$100,000-160,000K. This would pay for training, travel reimbursement and other related costs to the meetings as well as staff support that would include:
  - ✓ Administration
  - ✓ Coordination
  - ✓ Data analyses
  - ✓ Report writing
 Participants believed that the funding outlined above would only be sufficient for the bare minimum infrastructure needed to coordinate the process to deliver concise recommendations and not necessarily to move these recommendations forward through education and advocacy.

Through a conversation concerning the need to balance geographic representation and the challenges of supporting multiple panels, it was agreed that the recommendation would be to establish five regional panels. These Panels would coincide with the State’s Regional DSS training regions with one modification. Regions are anchored by the following counties:

- Buncombe;
- Mecklenburg;
- Guilford;
- Cumberland and
- Pitt (this was modified from Lenoir).

It was also recommended that meeting locations could be determined once membership of the respective Panel is confirmed.

It was also agreed that each panel should be comprised of no more than 15 individuals and that not all 100 counties would have direct representation on a regional panel.

While initial conversation and brainstorming focused on rich diversity of professionals and other “usual suspects, upon further reflection, it was agreed that the above list reflected the majority of those individuals who already were serving on the local CCPTs or CPFTs. It was therefore decided to identify the characteristics of the individuals who would be appropriate as potential Citizen Advisory Panel members. These include

- Influential (loud and vocal)
- Passionate about children’s issues
- Team-oriented
- Analytical
- Problem solver
- Global system thinker
- Knowledgeable about community and available resources
- Can make a commitment to attend the 4 meetings per year and perhaps review material throughout the year

A lengthy conversation ensued regarding the appropriate number/ percentage representation of family members/consumers, including youth on each panel. The suggestions ranged from having each panel comprised of 51% family members/youth/consumers to mandating that there be at least 3 family members (parents, foster parents and youth) on each panel. Another suggestion required equal membership from three distinct groups including community leaders who can influence policy at both local and state levels, self-advocates, individuals who have been or could have been consumers, and professionals (human services and others) – this can also include representatives from the CCPTs of CFPTs).

A point was made that representatives of the local CCPTs/CFPTs could also be seen as content experts and not official members of the regional panels.

An agreement was reached stipulating that the panel composition should reflect:

- 51% community members, consumers and /or individuals who are not currently human services professionals
- No more than 49% professionals working in either the private or public service systems.

In addition, panel membership should be reflective of the region (racial, social and economic) and a balance of rural and urban.

It was also agreed that all panel would have a DSS liaison that either could be from the state or local office.

In reviewing a draft job description of Panel members, it was acknowledged that a simple and concise message was needed for recruiting purposes. The Advisory Committee noted that all communication materials must distinguish clearly between the work of these Panels and that of the Community Child Protection Teams (CCPTs). The Citizen Review Panels are charged to review the larger statewide trends while the focus of the CCPTs is local. See Appendix E for the draft job description.

#### Determining how the Citizen Review Panels relate to the existing NC Child Fatality Prevention System.

The relationships between the existing Child Fatality Prevention System and the Citizen Review Panels were outlined. As described earlier the structure of the CRPs would include a central “Steering Committee” that was staffed by the sponsoring organization. It was agreed that the five regional CRPs

would appoint representatives (the exact number to be determined) to the Steering Committee. Those individuals would both ensure that information flows freely among the Regional Panels and the Steering committee.

The Steering Committee with staff from the sponsoring organization would share the annual public report inclusive of its recommendations to improve the child welfare system and keep children safe from abuse and neglect with the various bodies/task forces, including the Covenant for Children, the Child Fatality Task Force, the Legislative Study Commission on Youth, the State Collaborative for Children and Families and others and work together to move any appropriate agenda item forward. Staff would also share/discuss certain recommendations with staff of state agencies to ascertain perspective and potential barriers to implementation. In addition to sharing the final report with the State Director of Social Services and these entities described above, it was agreed that the Panels could also share their report with the governor and other members of the executive branch, members of the legislators and other advocacy organizations.

Furthermore, it was agreed that it would be important for the regional CRPs to receive information from the local CCPTs. Given that CCPTs are only required meet quarterly and that an annual report is required. It was agreed that a process/form would be developed in partnership with the CCPT Coordinator and representatives from local CCPTs for sharing of information. It was further agreed that the sharing of this information would be optional.

See Appendix F for the schematic, ‘NC CRP state perspective’ that outlines the structure and relationships between existing Child Community Protection Teams and Child Fatality Prevention Teams, a recommended steering committee and the 5-regional Citizen Review Panels.

#### Deciding Upon an Organizational Home for the Citizen Review Panels

Based upon the agreement that the Citizen Review Panels in NC should be supported by an independent entity which would be able to move agendas forward and not be limited by internal politics of State governments. The following criteria were identified as requirements for the organizational home/sponsoring organization:

- History of policy work
- Effective relationships with legislators and state departments/agency leaderships
- Demonstrated ability to move a policy agenda forward
- Its mission and goals are aligned with those of the Citizen Review Panels
- Demonstrated organizational capacity in terms of management and fiscal integrity
- Statewide presence
- No inherent conflict of interest
- Research capacity
- Data Analysis capacity
- Child welfare knowledge
- Training capacity
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity in terms of staff, board and policies

It was agreed that the organization could be a nonprofit, university or private for-profit entity. Furthermore, a coalition or partnership among entities could apply. It was also recommended that the State emphasize the importance of advocacy within its recruitment and selection process for the organization home.

### Developing a Structure to Provide Needed Staff Support and Information

Upon successfully receiving the award through a competitive application process, the sponsoring organization would then hire the appropriate staff to support the regional Panels and the Steering Committee. As outlined above staff would provide support in administration, coordination, data analyses and other duties as defined by the contract.

### Developing a Strategy for Recruiting, Screening, and Selecting Panel Members

It was agreed that the recruitment and selection process be developed by the organization selected to support the Citizen Review Panels. Staff reviewed processes of other states and have developed a member application as an initial draft. (See Appendix G for draft application.)

### Enacting Enabling Legislation and Developing a Budget to Operate the Panels

A lengthy conversation ensued regarding the need for and benefits of requesting legislation to authorize the Citizen Review Panels. It was agreed that the development of a statute requiring the implementation of these regional Citizen Review Panels should be explored. The statute would not include a fiscal note and would include the requirement that this process be staffed by an independent entity that met the criteria laid out above.

Our last conversation of the Advisory Committee related to the need for a name that could be readily accepted by all integral partner and more effectively describe the work of the panels. It was agreed that we would look into the legal use of the words council and commission. Ideas were brainstormed that included words such as:

- Child
- Safety
- Wellbeing
- Voice
- Outcomes
- Supporting
- Partners
- Council/Commission
- “Our”

It was agreed that these words would be sent out and each member would think and hopefully propose a name for these panels and a final decision will be made by the CRPs and sponsoring organization.

A report reflecting the work of the Advisory Committee was written. Drafts of the report inclusive of the appendices were shared with the committee for their review and feedback. Feedback and edits were incorporated into this final draft.

The following components of the planning for the implementation of CRPs were researched by staff and are provided as information for the next phase of CRP development.

### Developing Safeguards to Ensure Confidentiality

The Advisory Committee concluded that all policies and protocols that would govern the Citizen Review Panels be developed by the yet-to-be selected organization. Based upon the research conducted by staff the following are areas that would need to be covered by a confidentiality policy: the classification of the meetings (whether these meetings are considered under the “open meeting” category); the determination that the data reviewed within the meetings are confidential and whether the data is subject to subpoena or discovery; what type of information, if any can be disclosed by a person attending a citizen review panel meeting; and lastly what kind of confidentiality statement is required to be signed by the panel member.

It is imperative that prior to actual implementation of the Citizen Review Panels, that these policies and protocols be reviewed by the appropriate authorities within State government.

Furthermore, a policy should be developed to articulate that the final report and conclusions of the review panels may be disclosed, but the data on individuals that were classified as confidential or private data on individuals in the possession of the state agency, statewide system, or political subdivision from which the data were received may not be disclosed.

### Developing a System for Training Panel Members

Staff researched other models to provide an initial draft of what a training program might entail. The following is based upon research from other states:

Orientation:

- CAPTA Legislation
- History of Citizen Review Panels in U.S.
- Accomplishments in other states
- NC Citizen Review Panels
  - ✓ Mission, goals and objectives
  - ✓ Operating procedures
  - ✓ Confidentiality
  - ✓ Your role (job description)
  - ✓ Benefits of participating
  - ✓ Annual reports

It was further found that ongoing training was and should be provided on an as needed basis.

### Evaluating Sources of Information for Use by Citizen Review Panels

Based upon the research conducted by staff the following are recommendations regarding data that should be made available to CRPs as requested: number of reports, findings, repeat maltreatment, and timeliness of response, broken down by age, gender, race and ethnicity whenever possible; data from MRS tracking form - risk assessment, referrals from other agencies, services provided, Child and Family Team meetings, and contributory factors; CFSR measures – safety, permanency and well-being; data from the statewide CFSR process, including stakeholder interviews; any surveys or data regarding staff retention/turnover; and child fatality reports from both DSS (Intensive Child Fatality reviews) and the State Child Fatality Prevention Team. As other data becomes available, staff from DSS should keep the CRPs apprised and make it available as appropriate.

### Developing Specific Protocols and Procedures for Citizen Review Panel Work

Consistent with the decision of the Advisory Committee, staff conducted research and identified the following areas that should be addressed in the Citizen Review Panels' protocols and procedures:

- Appointment of members
- Terms of members
- Resignation
- Meetings
- Voting versus consensus
- The need for a quorum
- The need for leadership, chairs, co-chairs and their respective roles
- The role and membership of the Steering Committee
- Attendance
- Reimbursement of Members' Expenses
- Access to Data
- Confidentiality
- Policy for Consumer Concerns
- Response by the NC DSS to the Recommendations of the Citizen Review Panels

## Recommendations

The advisory committee recommended the creation of five regional Citizen Review Panels comprised of users of the system, leaders of the community, and professionals involved in service delivery to be staffed by an independent entity with a proven track-record in statewide policy work. The specifics include following recommendations:

Mission of the CRPs should be:

*The mission of NC's Citizen Review Panels is to promote/improve the safety, permanence and well-being for children and families in NC by assuring that children and families are provided the best possible services that include a comprehensive array of prevention through treatment within their community.*

Goals of the CRPs:

- Evaluate and assess the child welfare system within a quality improvement context.
- Promote quality child welfare practices.
- Promote and advocate for the provision of quality prevention services within the community.
- Advocate for the strengthening of resources.
- Educate and engage the community regarding the challenges facing children and families and in developing community-wide solutions.
- Recommend and advocate for policies and procedures that promote the highest practice standards.
- Engage in cross-system problem-solving involving both formal and informal support agencies, groups and individuals.
- Evaluate our effectiveness on annual basis.

The following are the “underlying values and principles” by which the CRPs should conduct its:

- No shame no blame
- Outcome driven
- Participation and expectations have to be practical; meetings are easily accessible
- Proactive orientation
- Attention to trends
- Focus on accountability
- Clear goals and expectations
- Connection between local and state
- Partnership between stakeholders; families/youth; public and private
- Infuse process with family driven voice
- Continuity of membership and participation
- Independent voice
- Position has to be effective advocate for change

The activities of the CRPs should include:

- Review policies and procedures in consultation with county and state child welfare staff to ensure the protection of children and in compliance with NC's CAPTA plan.
- Review the consistency of practice and compliance with stated policies.
- Work with the Child Fatality Prevention System (State Team, Local Teams and Community Child Protection Teams) to ascertain recommendations based upon their data and findings.
- Analyze trends, provide valuable insights that those working within the system may miss, and provide feedback on what is or is not working.
- Recommend policy changes and work with other entities as appropriate, to ensure implementation and follow-through.

- Advocate for needed resources to serve children and families, including prevention of child maltreatment and the treatment of children from the sequelae of abuse and neglect.
- Provide outside validation of the successes of the system and the efforts of the staff.
- Increase community understanding, ownership and investment in child welfare and family strengthening.
- Promote cooperation among community resources and child welfare services.
- Provide for public outreach and comment to assess the impact of procedures and policies upon children and families in the community.
- Prepare a public annual report containing a summary of the activities of the panel with recommendations to improve the child welfare system and keep children safe from abuse and neglect. In addition to submitting the annual public report to the Division of Social Services, the CRPs should also share the report and the response from the Division with the Governor and other members of the executive branch, members of the legislatures, the various bodies/task forces and advocacy organizations. (It should be noted that in order to be in full compliance with CAPTA, the Division must respond to this report in writing no later than six months after its receipt.)
- Monitor the extent to which the NCDSS is fulfilling child protection responsibilities in accordance with its Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Five-Year Plan, as required by the federal regulations.
- Each year the panels should establish their work plan and measures for success.

The core understandings regarding the proposed structure of the Citizen Review Panels in NC should include:

- The Citizen Review Panels would need to be supported by an independent organization outside DSS/DHHS.
- A central “Steering Committee” with support from the sponsoring organization would be needed. The Steering Committee would be comprised of representatives of the Citizen Review Panels. This Committee would oversee and support staff in following responsibilities:
  - ✓ Advocacy
  - ✓ Synthesis
  - ✓ Report writing
- The support organization should have the ability to influence the legislative process.
- State’s CAPTA’s funds would be used to underwrite the support organization. Participants anticipate that the budget would be approximately \$100,000-160,000K. This would pay for training, travel reimbursement and other related costs to the meetings as well as staff support that would include:
  - ✓ Administration
  - ✓ Coordination
  - ✓ Data analyses
  - ✓ Report writing
 Participants believed that the funding outlined above would only be sufficient for the bare minimum infrastructure needed to coordinate the process to deliver concise recommendations and not necessarily to move these recommendations forward through education and advocacy.
- Establish five regional panels to coincide with the State’s Regional DSS training regions with one modification. Regions are anchored by the following counties:
  - ✓ Buncombe
  - ✓ Mecklenburg
  - ✓ Guilford;
  - ✓ Cumberland and
  - ✓ Pitt (this was modified from Lenoir).
- Determine meeting locations once membership of the respective Panel is confirmed.

- Each panel should be comprised of no more than 15 individuals and that not all 100 counties would have direct representation on a regional panel.
- The following characteristics should be used to identify individuals who would be appropriate as potential Citizen Advisory Panel members:
  - ✓ Influential (loud and vocal)
  - ✓ Passionate about children's issues
  - ✓ Team-oriented
  - ✓ Analytical
  - ✓ Problem solver
  - ✓ Global system thinker
  - ✓ Knowledgeable about community and available resources
  - ✓ Can make a commitment to attend the 4 meetings per year and perhaps review material throughout the year
- The panel composition should be as follows:
  - 51% community members, consumers and /or individuals who are not currently human services professionals
  - No more than 49% professionals working in either the private or public service systems.
 In addition, panel membership should be reflective of the region (racial, social and economic) and a balance of rural and urban.
- All panels should have a DSS liaison that either could be from the state or local office.

Coordination between the CRPs and the existing NC Child Fatality Prevention System should include:

- The five regional CRPs should appoint representatives to the Steering Committee (the exact number to be determined) to ensure that information flows freely among the Regional Panels and the Steering committee.
- The Steering Committee with staff from the sponsoring organization should share the annual public report inclusive of its recommendations to improve the child welfare system and keep children safe from abuse and neglect with the State Director of Social Services, the Governor and other members of the executive branch, members of the legislators and other advocacy organizations.
- Staff should share the annual public report with the various bodies/task forces and work together to move any appropriate agenda item forward.
- Staff should also share/discuss certain recommendations with staff of state agencies to ascertain perspective and potential barriers to implementation.
- Develop a process/form in partnership with the CCPT Coordinator and representatives from local CCPTs for sharing of information from local CCPTs. It was further agreed that the sharing of this information would be optional.

The organizational home for the Citizen Review Panels should be supported by an independent entity (a nonprofit, university, private for-profit entity or a coalition or partnership among entities), as previously stated, thereby able to move agendas forward and not be limited by internal politics of State governments, the following criteria were identified as requirements for the organizational home/sponsoring organization:

- History of policy work
- Effective relationships with legislators and state departments/agency leaderships
- Demonstrated ability to move a policy agenda forward
- Its mission and goals are aligned with those of the Citizen Review Panels
- Demonstrated organizational capacity in terms of management and fiscal integrity
- Statewide presence
- No inherent conflict of interest

- Research capacity
- Data Analysis capacity
- Child welfare knowledge
- Training capacity
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity in terms of staff, board and policies

It was also recommended that the State emphasize the importance of advocacy within its recruitment and selection process for the organization home.

It was agreed that the recruitment and selection process of panel members should be developed by the organization selected to support the Citizen Review Panels. Staff reviewed processes of other states and have developed a member application as an initial draft.

Explore the development of a statute (enabling legislation) that requires the implementation of these regional Citizen Review Panels. The statute should not include a fiscal note and would include the requirement that this process be staffed by an independent entity that met the criteria laid out above.

Name

Decide upon a name that could be readily accepted by all integral partners and more effectively describe the work of the panels that may include words such as:

- |             |                      |
|-------------|----------------------|
| • Child     | • Supporting         |
| • Safety    | • Partners           |
| • Wellbeing | • Council/Commission |
| • Voice     | • “Our”              |
| • Outcomes  |                      |

## **Appendix A: Existing Citizen Review Panel Structures in States with Comparable Systems (State supervised, county-administered)**

### **California:**

- There are CRPs in Calaveras, San Mateo and Ventura counties, as well as a statewide California Citizen Review Panel.
- State Administered

### **Colorado:**

Citizen Review Panels:

- Colorado's Children's Justice Task Force
- Institutional Abuse and Neglect Review Team
- Pueblo County Children Protection Team
- Staffed by State agency

### **Georgia:**

Composed of three designated panels:

- Child Protective Services Advisory Committee (CPSAC);
- Children's Justice Act Advisory Committee (CJAAC); and
- Child Fatality Review Panel (CFRP).
- Individual priorities and activities reflect their unique perspective and interest in the child welfare system. Collectively, they share a common goal: the safety, permanency and well-being of Georgia's most valuable, and vulnerable, resource – children.
- Staffed by State agency

### **Maryland:**

- 3 statewide CRPs (State Citizens' Review Board for Children, State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, State Child Fatality Review Team.)
- Staffed by State agency

### **Michigan:**

Three CRP statewide, membership based in Lansing, MI

- Citizen Review Panel for Prevention,
- Citizen Review Panel for Children's Protective Services, Foster Care and Adoption, and
- Citizen Review Panel on Child Fatalities
- Staffed by State agency

### **Minnesota:**

- Five county based panels and a state steering committee
- Staffed by State agency

### **Nevada:**

Consists of three panels:

- Statewide CRP;
- Northern Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC);
- Southern CAC.
- Staffed by an independent consulting firm

**New York:**

There are three panels in New York State, each with 13 members.

- The Western panel covers the 17 counties in the western region of the state.
- The New York City Panel covers the five boroughs of New York City.
- The Eastern Panel covers the remaining 40 counties.
- The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (SCAA) is a statewide, nonprofit, policy analysis and advocacy organization provides the administrative support to the Panels.

**North Dakota – NA****Ohio**

Ohio has experienced a transition in the Citizen Review Panel initiatives. Beginning in the State Fiscal Year 2008, Ohio utilized three programs to meet the requirement to maintain three citizen review panels. This consists of two statewide boards:

- The Statewide Child Fatality Review Advisory Committee (SCFRAC) and
- The Overcoming Hurdles In Ohio Youth Advisory Board (OHIO YAB); and
- One county Citizen Review Board.
- Staffed by State agency

**Pennsylvania: - NA****Virginia:**

Virginia has 3 CRPs. The decision was made in 1999 to utilize 3 existing groups that had broad representation and were willing to incorporate CRP issues into their regular meetings. The groups are:

- The State Fatality Review Team,
- The Governor's Advisory Board for Child Abuse and Neglect, and
- The Court Appointed Special Advocate/Children's Justice Act Advisory Committee.
- Staffed by State agency

**Wisconsin:**

- Currently in Wisconsin there are four state-designated Citizen Review Panels which are either city or county-based.
- Staffed by State agency

**CRP Structures throughout the country:**

- 6 states are supported by universities (none of which are state-supervised, county-administered systems)
- 5 states are supported by private entities
- 39 states staff it from within their departments/divisions
- Budgets are provided either through CAPTA, other federal funds or state general funds
- For those states that out-source the support of the CRP budgets range from \$100,000 - \$167,000

## Appendix B: Interviewees

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Alisa	Ashe	Macon CAC/CCPT
Terry	Bell	Region 1 CCPT
Lien	Bragg	Citizen
Candice	Britt	State DSS
George	Bryan	Administrator, Guardian Ad Litem Program, NC AOC
Elaine	Cabinum-Foeller	Medical Director
Nancy	Carter	Associate Director, ILR, Inc.; Executive Director, SAYSO, Inc
Dennis	Daugherty	Mecklenburg DSS/CCPT
Brenda	Edwards	PH_CFPT Coordinator
Brenda	Jackson	DSS Director
Bob	Johnson	DSS Director
Libby	Jones	Co-chair NC State Collaborative
Liz	Jones	CCPT chair
Catherine	Joyner	PH - wrote first report
Brett	Loftis	Executive Director, Council for Children's Rights
Cebby	McCarter	Mecklenburg CCPT
Karen	McLeod	Pres/CEO, Children & Family Services Association-NC
Susan	Osborne	DSS Director
Cathy	Purvis	Exec Dir., CACs of NC
Krista	Ragan	CME
Tammy	Shook	DSS supervisor
Mandy	Stone	DSS Director
Robin	Testerman	Regional CCPT
Tom	Vitaglione	Task Force
Jane	Volland	Administrator, Guardian Ad Litem Program, NC AOC
Rebecca	Wells	Co-chair, NC state Collaborative

## Appendix C: Advisory Committee Membership

<b>Member</b>		<b>Affiliation/Organization</b>
Alisa	Ashe	Macon CAC/CCPT
Terry	Bell	Region 1 CCPT
Lien	Bragg	Citizen
George	Bryan	The Children's Home
Brandy	Bynum	Action for Children, NC
Elaine	Cabinum-Foeller	TEDI BEAR: Children's Advocacy Center
Tammy	Campbell	Family Representative – Alamance County
Nancy	Carter	SAYSO, Inc
Dennis	Daugherty or	
Cebby	McCarter	Mecklenburg DSS/CCPT
Judith	Darling	Middle Creek High School
Brenda	Edwards	Public Health – CFPT Coordinator
Phyllis	Fulton	NC Division of Social Services
Dana	Hagele	Child Medical Evaluation Program
Elizabeth	Hudgins	North Carolina Child Fatality Task Force
Alisa	Huffman	Family Court Manager, AOC
Debbie	Jones	Wayne County DSS
Libby	Jones	Co-chair NC State Collaborative
Liz	Jones	CCPT chair
Bob	Johnson	Pamlico County DSS
Charisse	Johnson	NC Division of Social Services
Kathy	Johnson	Jordan Institute for Families
Catherine	Joyner	Public Health – Child Maltreatment Leadership Team
Brett	Loftis	Council for Children's Rights
Mary	Lloyd	Family Partner Coordinator, Smoky Mountain Center
Karen	McLeod	Children & Family Services Association-NC
De'Von	McRavion	Youth Representative, SAYSO
Stephanie	Nantz	NC Youth Advocacy and Involvement Office
Angelica	Oberleithner	Durham's Partnership for Children
Kristin	O'Connor	NC Division of Social Services
Chaney	Porter	Youth Representative, SAYSO
Cathy	Purvis	Child Advocacy Centers of NC
Krista	Ragan	Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
Phillip	Redmond	The Duke Endowment
Sheri	Rettew	Promise Place
		Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities & Substance Abuse Services
Susan	Robinson	
Anne	Sayers	PCA-NC
Jan	Spencer	Stokes County DSS
Robin	Testerman	Surry & Regional CCPT; Children's Center of Surry, Inc.
Tony	Troop	Public Health – CFST Program Coordinator
Jennifer	Tolle-Whiteside	North Carolina Community Foundation
Tom	Vitaglione	Action for Children, NC
Jane	Volland	Guardian Ad Litem Program, NC AOC
Rebecca	Wells	Co-chair, NC state Collaborative

## Appendix D: Advisory Committee Minutes

### Citizen Review Panel Advisory Committee

January 27, 2010

Meeting notes

#### Context

Charisse provided the context of this process and relayed the Division's commitment to make this a meaningful, value-added process. She went on to share the Division's intention to share the recommendations across the State divisions as appropriate to ensure buy-in and prevent any surprises.

The following are the "underlying values and principles" by which the ad hoc committee will conduct its work and how the panels would follow in their work:

- No shame no blame
- Outcome driven
- Participation and expectations have to be practical; meetings are easily accessible
- Proactive orientation
- Attention to trends
- Focus on accountability
- Clear goals and expectations
- Connection between local and state
- Partnership between stakeholders; families/youth; public and private
- Infuse process with family driven voice
- Continuity of membership and participation
- Independent voice
- Position has to be effective advocate for change

**CAPTA requirements for Citizen Review Panels** were discussed and include:

Citizen Review Panels are charged with reviewing the compliance of state and local child protective service agencies in the discharge of their responsibilities with respect to the following:

- To evaluate the extent to which the state is effectively fulfilling its child protection responsibilities in accordance with the CAPTA State Plan.
- Each Citizen Review Panel must examine the practices (in addition to policies and procedures) of the state and local child welfare agencies.
- To review child fatalities and near-fatalities.
- To examine other criteria important to ensure the protection of children, such as the extent to which the state child protective services system is coordinated with the foster care and adoption programs established under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act
- The citizen review panels are to develop annual reports and make them available to the public.
- Citizen Review Panels must provide public outreach and comment in order to assess the impact of current procedures and practices upon children and families in the community.
- The appropriate state agency is required to respond in writing no later than six months.

The **scope of work for the Ad hoc committee** was reviewed and includes:

- Defining goals and objectives of the panels
- Determining the structure and number of citizen review panels
- Determining how the Citizen Review Panels relate to the existing NC Child Fatality Prevention System

- Deciding upon an organizational home for the citizen review panels (type and capacity)
- Developing a structure to provide needed staff support
- Developing a strategy for recruiting and selecting members
- Evaluating sources of information for use by citizen review panels
- Developing safeguards to ensure confidentiality
- Developing a system for training members
- Developing specific protocols and procedures for Citizens Review Panel work

We brainstormed the following **goals and benefits** of implementing Citizen Review Panels:

- Promotion of safety, permanence and well-being for children and families in NC
- System improvement
- Strengthen the community
- Community awareness
- Change the frame – broaden beyond DSS
- Provide evidence that government can and has changed
- DSS is supported by the communities
- Cost savings and reinvestment
- Standards of care across the state
- Potential for advocating/lobbying
- To better understand the system
- Provide opportunity for connecting the systems, the dots
- Compliance with CAPTA
- Independent voice
- Opportunity for education
- By putting the review in the public realm it offers the opportunity for more personal perspective from the DSS staff and allows DSS to be one of many partners and not the sole responsible entity
- Can change image of DSS to an agency that can be trusted and is there to provide assistance and support
- Can have an impact on the outcomes
- Participatory process not as legalistic

#### **Who else needs to be at the table?**

- Native American voice
- Hispanic voice
- More families
- Law enforcement
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- County officials
- Schools
- Faith community

It was agreed that members of the Advisory Committee would forward recommendations and that each individual would be contacted to determine interest and fit.

#### **Current NC system (Child Fatality Prevention System)**

The current system was reviewed and includes the following components:

- **Community Child Protection Teams**  
County-level review of child abuse and neglect. Make recommendations to the State Team and local agencies based on case reviews.

- **Child Fatality Prevention Teams**  
County- level review of non-DSS related child fatalities. Make recommendations State Team and locally based on case reviews.
- **NC Child Fatality Prevention Team**  
State-level review of child fatality cases within the medical examiner’s system. Make recommendations to the Child Fatality Task Force based on data and trends.
- **NC Child Fatality Task Force**  
Policy and administrative action “arm” of the system. Make recommendations to the General Assembly and other State-level groups.
- **Regional Child Protection Teams**  
Seven regional teams responsible for receiving County CCPT end of year reports and developing one regional report based on these reports and other information received from teams. A special emphasis was to be placed on reviewing components of child welfare policy.

A lengthy conversation ensued regarding the “intensive fatality reviews” and which entities are responsible at the local level for their implementation. A revised flow chart is as follows (thanks to Krista Ragan for the revision):

### **Lessons from other States**

Research and conversations with other states have identified the following as critical components for successful CRPs:

- Clear mission and role
- Ongoing Strategic Planning process with clear goals and objectives that are time limited and focused
- Training for members
- Strong partnership with state and local child welfare system
  - Specific mechanism for communication
  - Liaison person to CRP
- Establish By-Laws that includes how membership will be handled
  - Need diverse membership
  - Members are appointed in some states
- Financial Resources
  - Staff
  - Travel money for members
  - Training resources
- Specific way state will respond to recommendations

Citizen Review Panels in other states have been successful in achieving the following:

- Changed foster care planning to be more youth and family centered - Minnesota
- Training and debriefing for staff involved in a fatality investigation as a way to prevent turnover and increase retention - Colorado
- Clarified definition of medical neglect - Virginia
- Supported the expansion of home visiting as a way to prevent child abuse and neglect - Virginia
- Developed standardized process for case worker transition - Wyoming
- Began a process to address racial disparities through technical assistance - New York
- Increase public awareness and understanding of the professional role of caseworkers in child welfare ... “caseworkers make a difference.” - New York

A request was made to research the impacts of Citizen Review Panels on their respective Child and Family Service Reviews. A report will be brought back to the next meeting.

## **Parking Lot**

Areas that need to be further discussed or require follow-up:

- Clarify language regarding child fatalities
- Clarify the citizen review panel's relationship to the existing state system
- The process needs to include a continuous feedback loop, a commitment to honest dialogue
- Need to develop procedures and specific mechanisms for the state response to ensure efficacy beyond current staffing. This would include how the Citizen Review Panels and the state work with the existing state and local infrastructure
- Intensive fatality reviews
- The name of the citizen review panel
- Training at child welfare
- Model after "community action committee"

**Next Meeting: Thursday, February 25<sup>th</sup>,  
Paragon Commercial Bank – Training Room  
3535 Glenwood Avenue  
Raleigh, NC 27612**

## Appendix D: Advisory Committee Minutes (continued)

### Citizen Review Panel Advisory Committee February 25, 2010

#### Meeting notes

#### Review of minutes –

No comments had been received prior to and no additional comments were made at the meeting.

#### Design:

##### Values/Principles/Goals/Objectives:

We reviewed the separate handout, CRP mission and goal statements. Discussion was focused on the definition of best practices, the limitation of the term – child protective services versus child welfare and the importance of including prevention throughout the documents. See separate document for changes based upon comments.

##### Structures used in other states:

The handout, “Existing Structures in States with Comparable Systems” was reviewed. The following are highlights:

- Most states were using existing bodies including the state’s child fatality team or the Children’s Justice Act Advisory Committee (CJAAC).
- Most states have 3-5 panels.
- Some only serve finite localities (Minnesota has 5 county specific panels) and do not have statewide coverage.
- The majority of states are staffed by personnel at the state agency (DSS/DHHS) and do not feel that they have an independent voice. A correction was noted regarding Nevada which incorrectly stated its CRP was staffed by a consultant but rather is staffed by state personnel.
- New York State is staffed by personnel at a public policy organization. It had been housed at a university however it was found that the university did not have systems or legislative policy experience.
- Those states that supported external staffing of the Citizen Review panels provided budgets of \$100k – \$160k

##### Structure

Upon lengthy discussion, the following are the core understandings regarding the proposed structure of the Citizen Review Panels in NC:

- A central “Steering Committee” with administrative function would be needed. This Committee would have the following responsibilities:
  - Advocacy
  - Synthesis
  - Report writing
- The Panels would need to be supported by an independent body outside DSS/DHHS.
- Want the process and support entity to have the ability to influence the legislative process.
- Establish 3-5 panels that would provide statewide coverage.
- Would request State’s CAPTA’s funds to support the panels. The budget would be approximately \$100-160K. This would provide staff support that would include:
  - Administration
  - Resources

- Coordination
- Data analyses

Additionally, it was noted that the funding outlined above would only be sufficient for the bare minimum infrastructure needed to coordinate the process to deliver concise recommendations and not necessarily to move these recommendations forward through education and advocacy.

It was agreed that further discussion regarding staff role, infrastructure required and organizational home would occur at our next meeting.

See attachment 'NC CRP state perspective' that outlines the structure and relationships between existing Child Community Protection Teams and Child Fatality Prevention Teams, a recommended steering committee and the 5-regional Citizen Review Panels

Five regional panels are recommended that would follow the division of the 5 Regional DSS training regions with one modification. Regions are anchored by the following counties:

- Buncombe;
- Mecklenburg;
- Guilford;
- Cumberland and
- Greenville (this was modified from Lenoir).

It was also recommended that meeting locations could be determined once membership of the respective Panel is confirmed.

It was also agreed that each panel should be comprised of no more than 15 individuals and that not all 100 counties would have direct representation on a regional panel.

A lengthy conversation ensued in terms of who the members of the 5 regional Citizen Review Panels should be in terms of representation and specific characteristics, including:

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| • Local MH                 | • County commissioner                                  |
| • Local DSS                | • Non-profit sector                                    |
| • Local CCPT               | • Health sector  |
| • Local CFPT               | • Early childhood                                      |
| • Courts                   | • Faith community                                      |
| • GAL                      | • Philanthropic  |
| • School Board             | • Business community (especially banking)              |
| • Consumer of CPS Services | • Youth who has been in foster care or involved in CPS |
| • Foster care parent       |  |

Upon further discussion, it was agreed that the above list reflected the majority of those individuals who already were serving on the local CCPTs or CPFTs. It was therefore decided to identify the characteristics of the individuals who we would want as potential Citizen Advisory Panel members. These include

- Influential (loud and vocal)
- Passionate about children's issues
- Team-oriented
- analytical
- problem solver
- global system thinker

- knowledgeable about community and available resources
- can make a commitment to attend the 4 meetings per year and perhaps review material throughout the year

It was further agreed that the membership of the regional panels would be comprised of individuals who had a balance of expertise within human service sector and the general public and be reflective of the community in terms of socio-economic, race/ethnicity and rural and urban communities.

A lengthy conversation ensued regarding the appropriate number/ percentage representation of family members/consumers, including youth on each panel. This included the desire to have 51% family members/youth/consumers of services to mandating that there be at least 3 family members (parents, foster parents and youth) on each panel. We also discussed that perhaps the panel should be comprised of:

- 33% community leaders who can influence policy at both local and state levels (influential citizens -- need language to describe this adequately)
- 33% self-advocates, individuals who have been or could have been consumers, and
- 33% professionals (human services and others – this can also include representatives from the CCPTs of CFPTs).

A point was made that representatives of the local CCPTs/CFPTs could also be seen as content experts and not official members of the regional panels.

It was also agreed that all panel would have a DSS liaison that either could be from the state or local office.

### Summary and Next Steps

Our next meeting is not March 17<sup>th</sup> as it conflicts with a standing meeting of many of the Committee members.

The agenda for our next meeting includes:

- Confirming the membership of the regional panels
- Decisions regarding staff role, infrastructure required and organizational home
- Relationship to existing State Child Fatality prevention System
- Policy and procedures regarding the response from the State (as a method to ensure efficacy beyond current personnel)
- Name

## Appendix D: Advisory Committee Minutes (continued)

### NC Citizen Review Panel Advisory Committee

#### Agenda

March 23, 2010

#### Review of minutes –

No comments had been received prior to and no additional comments were made at the meeting.

#### Design:

##### Review of job description

The job description was reviewed and the following key points were made:

- The overall function should be consistent with the goals and mission of the Panels
- A more simplified and concise blurb will be used for recruiting purposes.
- We also agreed that the distinction between the work of these panels and that of the Community Child Protection Teams (CCPTs) is that these panels are charged to review the larger picture (maintaining a 40,000 foot perspective) and statewide trends whereas the purpose of the CCPTs is local.

See attached revised version reflecting the changes offered.

##### Composition of the Panel

It was agreed that the panel composition should be as follows:

- 51% community members, consumers and /or non-human services professionals
- No more than 49% professionals working in either the private or public service systems.

In addition, panel membership should be reflective of the region (racial, social and economic) and a balance of rural and urban.

##### Recruiting of Panel Members

It was agreed that the recruitment and selection process be developed by the organization selected to support the citizen review panels. The organization would be charged to follow the recommendations made by this advisory group.

##### Organizational Home criteria

The organizational home would need to have the following:

- History of policy work
- Effective relationships with legislators and state departments/agency leaderships
- Demonstrated ability to move a policy agenda forward
- Its mission and goals are aligned with those of the Citizen Review Panels
- Demonstrated organizational capacity in terms of management and fiscal integrity
- Statewide presence
- No inherent conflict of interest
- Research capacity
- Data Analysis capacity

- Child welfare knowledge
- Training capacity
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity in terms of staff, board and policies

It was agreed that the organization could be a nonprofit, university or private for profit entity. Furthermore, a coalition or partnership among entities could apply together to fulfill these requirements. It was also recommended that the State emphasizes the importance of advocacy within its recruitment and selection process for the organization home.

#### Relationship to existing State Child Fatality Prevention System and other policy bodies

In reviewing the chart outline of relationships, several clarifications were made including:

- Citizen review panels are charged with submitting its report to the Director of Social Services.
- The Director or designee needs to respond to the report within 6 months.
- Both these reports are then submitted to the federal government as part of the CAPTA Plan/report.
- Other CRPs share their report with the governor and other members of the executive branch, members of the legislators and other advocacy organizations.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding how the recommendations would move forward. It was agreed that the staff of the supporting organization would share the report with the various bodies/task forces outlined in the chart as appropriate. Staff would also share/discuss certain recommendations with staff of state agencies to ascertain perspective and potential barriers to implementation, etc.

#### *Information from CCPTs*

It was agreed that it would be important for the regional CRPs to receive information from the local CCPTs. Given that CCPTs are only required meet quarterly and that an annual report is required. It was agreed that a process/form would be developed in partnership with the CCPT Coordinator and representatives from local CCPTs for sharing of information. It was further agreed that the sharing of this information would be optional.

#### Policy and procedures regarding the response from the State

(As a method to ensure efficacy beyond current personnel)

It was agreed that we should explore the development of a statute that requires the implementation of these regional Citizen Review Panels. The statute would not include a fiscal note and would include the requirement that this process be staffed by an independent entity that met the criteria laid out above.

## Name

We discussed the need for a name that could be readily accepted by all integral partner and more effectively describe the work of the panels. It was agreed that we would look into the legal use of the words council and commission. We brainstormed ideas for key words which included:

- Child
- Safety
- Wellbeing
- Voice
- Outcomes
- Supporting
- Partners
- Council/Commission
- “Our”

It was agreed that these words would be sent out and each member would think and hopefully propose a name for these panels.

## Summary and Next Steps

It was noted that this is officially our last meeting. The remainder of the work will be conducted by email. Upon approval of the minutes of this meeting, a report that includes all the recommendations and the work to-date will be developed and forwarded out to advisory members for review and feedback.

The following represents a proposed schedule for completion of this process:

- Report draft is complete and forwarded to advisory committee members by April 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Comments are due back by May 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Final draft out for second review by May 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Comments are due back by May 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Report submitted to DSS by May 28<sup>th</sup>.

## **Appendix E: Panel Member Job Description**

### **Citizen Review Panel Member Job Description**

#### **Overall Function:**

Volunteer community members:

- Evaluate and assess the outcomes and processes of the child welfare system within a quality improvement context
- Promote quality child welfare practices
- Promote and advocate for the provision of quality prevention services within the community
- Advocate for the strengthening of resources
- Educate and engage the community regarding the challenges facing children and families and in developing community-wide solutions
- Recommend and advocate for policies and procedures that promote the highest practice standards
- Engage in cross-system problem-solving involving both formal and informal support agencies, groups and individuals
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the process on annual basis

#### **What the Volunteer Experience Can Offer You:**

- An opportunity to actively participate on the behalf of children in NC especially those who have experienced abuse and/or neglect.
- An opportunity to put your interests, talents and expertise to good use for a worthy cause.
- Insight and understanding regarding the child welfare system that includes: child abuse and neglect issues, case plans and efforts to reunite families, the best interests of children, child development and attachment issues, cultural considerations including the Indian Child Welfare Act and heritage preservation, the disparities of the numbers of children and families of color involved in the child protection system, the dynamics of domestic violence, and the court process.
- An opportunity to have a positive impact by addressing the disparities of the numbers of children and families of color involved in the child welfare system.
- In-service training on topics such as cultural diversity, chemical dependency and mental health, education and community resources.
- Access to a wide variety of community resources and people.
- A meaningful, important volunteer experience that will add skills, provide insights, interests and challenges.
- An opportunity to update and add to your resume.
- An opportunity to promote and affect positive changes for the well-being of children.

#### **Qualifications and Skills:**

- Public-spirited, motivated by a sincere and demonstrated concern for the welfare of the citizens of their community;
- Impartial, fair, open-minded, objective, and willing to listen to other points of view;
- Critical and practical thinkers who can work as a member of a team, engage in creative problem-solving;
- Able communicators who can work effectively and cooperatively with other board members, the county directors of social services, the county commissioners, community groups, citizens, state and local government agencies, state legislators and members of the Executive branch;

- Desire and willingness to promote and advocate for needed changes in the child welfare system as identified by the panels.
- Ability to articulate ideas, concerns and thoughts.
- Ability to educate others about the issues within the child welfare system and are competent and comfortable advocates on the behalf of children and families
- Sensitivity to cultural, ethnic and economic diversity.
- May not currently be involved in a child protection or criminal matter.

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

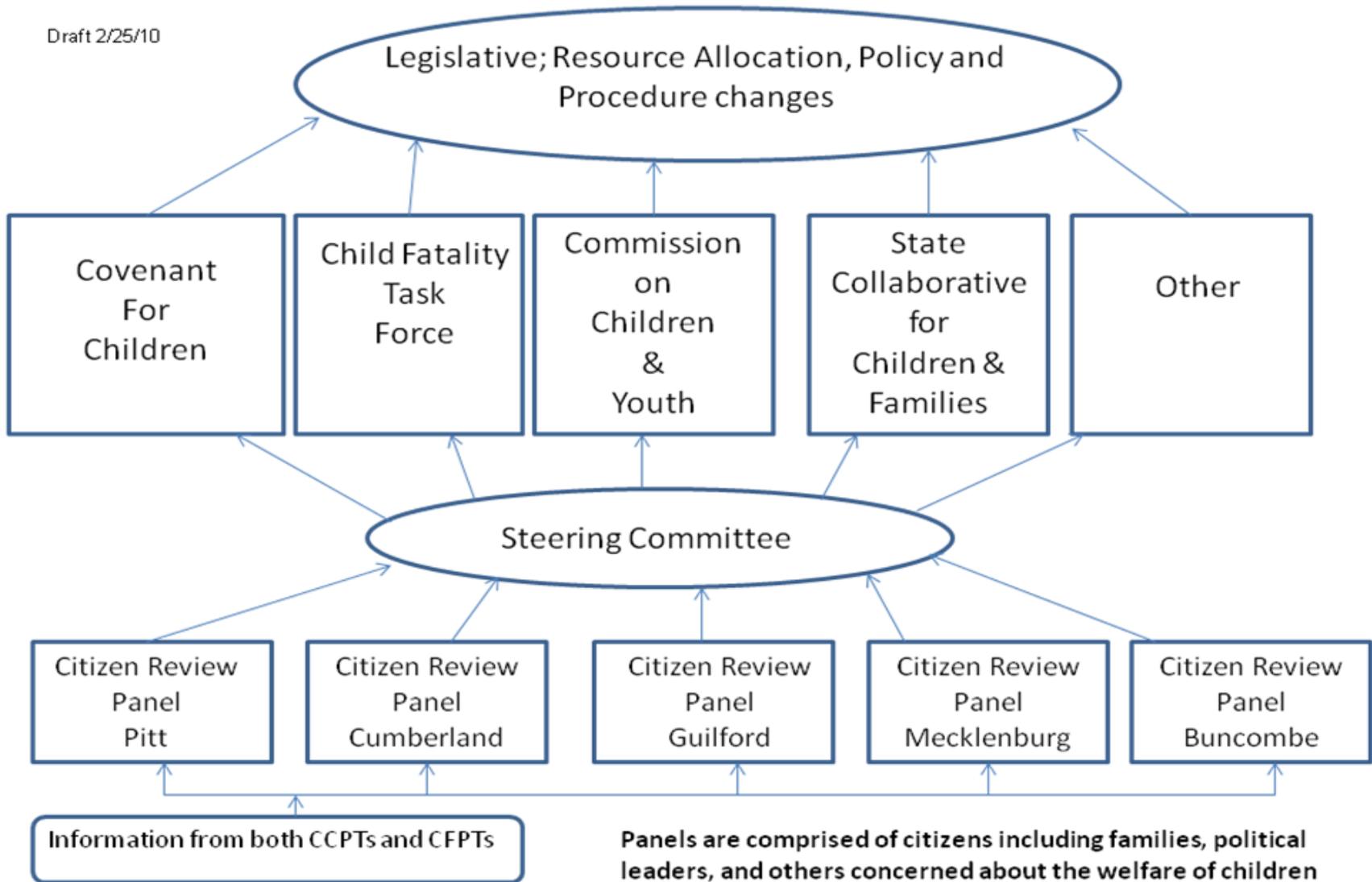
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Complete initial orientation and ongoing training as appropriate.
- Attend and participate in all quarterly meetings (committing to approximately 4-5 hours quarterly).
- Examine child welfare policies, procedures and practices of the state and county child protection agencies.
- Assist in the analysis of the information gathered.
- Assist in the compilation of an annual report summarizing the activities of the panel.
- Assist in advancing community understanding and investment in protecting and promoting the welfare of all children.
- Provide feedback on what is working well.
- Make recommendations for needed policy changes and suggest corrective actions.
- Promote cooperation among community resources and child welfare agencies.
- Increase community understanding, ownership and investment in child protection.
- Advocate for needed policy changes.
- Advocate for needed resources to protect children from abuse and neglect, to ensure permanent homes for children in a timely manner and promote child well- being.
- Submit reimbursement claims and other requested records in a timely manner.

Upon selection, the panel member will sign:

- a conflict of interest statement, and
- a release authorizing a criminal records check as allowed by statute.

**Appendix F: NC CRP State Perspective**

Draft 2/25/10





Have you ever served on a government board or commission? Are you serving on one now? Yes\_\_ No\_\_  
*If "Yes," please list the name(s) of the board(s) or commission(s) and approximate dates of service.*

Are you willing to serve an initial term of two years on the panel? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Have you or has anyone in your family been involved with the Social Services or Court systems? Yes\_\_  
No\_\_  
If yes, please explain.

If yes, did you feel you were treated fairly? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_  
Please explain:

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### References

Please list the names, **complete addresses, including the zip code**, and daytime phone numbers of three references.

1.

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2.

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3.

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I understand that I will have to commit to attending regular quarterly meetings and other events that are mutually agreed upon by the regional panel such as presentations to the community, etc.

I understand that as a Panel Member I will need to attend a one-day training (*training dates are listed on our website at \_\_\_\_\_*). I intend to participate in the citizen reviewer training to be held \_\_\_\_\_ at: \_\_\_\_\_.

In order to promote the integrity of the citizen review panel, ensure confidentiality is maintained, to protect the safety of the volunteer panel members and those involved with the agencies and cases reviewed, we use many methods of screening, including criminal and child maltreatment records checks. Are you willing to allow us to conduct a thorough background check on you? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, have filled out a \_\_\_\_ Form (*NC Central Registry and Criminal History Prescreen/pages - and - of this application*) and have submitted it with this application.

I understand the responsibilities of being a North Carolina Citizen Review Panel Member and that I will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement prior to becoming a Panel Member.

I submit the statements on this application are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that falsification on this application can disqualify me from consideration or can result in dismissal at a later time.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** You are not required to answer the following questions. However, they are asked so that the Panel may reflect the demographics of North Carolina as required by law.

**Race:** (*please check one below*)

- \_\_\_\_ African-American
- \_\_\_\_ American Indian
- \_\_\_\_ Asian
- \_\_\_\_ Alaskan Native/Pacific Islander
- \_\_\_\_ Euro-American
- \_\_\_\_ Hispanic
- \_\_\_\_ Other (*please describe*)

**Gender:** (*please check one below*)

- \_\_\_\_ Male
- \_\_\_\_ Female

**Disabled:** (*please check one below*)

- \_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_ No (*If "Yes," explain needed accommodations*)

**Please return the completed printed or typed application to the address below:**

**North Carolina Citizen Review Panel, Inc.  
PO Box  
Raleigh, NC**

*If you need further information or assistance with this application, please call \_\_\_\_\_ or email \_\_\_\_\_ . You may also fax a completed application to \_\_\_\_\_ or download this form at \_\_\_\_\_, fill it out and email it to \_\_\_\_\_ -- as an attachment.*

The following are questions that can be used during the interview process:

Please state why your personal and professional experience and interests qualifies you for consideration as a North Carolina Citizen Review Panel Member:

What do you hope to get out of this experience?

Do you have any reservations about serving as a panel member?