

DHS Legislative Update

Presented to: DHS Board of Directors

Date: September 17, 2014



Georgia Department of Human Services

Vision, Mission and Core Values

Vision

Stronger Families for a Stronger Georgia.

Mission

Strengthen Georgia by providing Individuals and Families access to services that promote self-sufficiency, independence, and protect Georgia's vulnerable children and adults.

Core Values

- Provide access to resources that offer support and empower Georgians and their families.
- Deliver services professionally and treat all clients with dignity and respect. Manage business operations effectively and efficiently by aligning resources across the agency.
- Promote accountability, transparency and quality in all services we deliver and programs we administer.
- Develop our employees at all levels of the agency.

Overview - study committees

DHS is currently working with the General Assembly on four legislative study committees:

- **Division of Aging Services:** Senate Study Committee on Emergency Relocation of Abused Adults; Senate Senior Technology Gap Study Committee
- **Division of Family and Children Services:** House Study Committee on Regulation of Child Welfare Providers; Senate Child Protection Study Committee
- **Department of Human Services Office of Inspector General:** House Study Committee on Regulation of Child Welfare Providers

House Resolution 1723: creation

House Study Committee on Licensing and Inspection of Child Welfare Providers

"...WHEREAS, a comprehensive review of Georgia's existing licensing, inspection, and placement processes for public and private child welfare providers is needed in order to determine whether such processes:

1. Effectively and consistently address the important state interest in the safety of children;
2. Avoid unnecessary state interference in routine operations while ensuring that safe conditions and services are provided to children and youth;
3. Respect and make allowances for the operations of such providers with strong performance records while providing safeguards against harm to children and youth that could arise from a lack of state oversight;
4. Are duplicative or overly burdensome; "

*This covers both DHS Office of Inspector General Residential Child Care Unit and the Division of Family and Children Services Office of Provider Management

House Resolution 1723: agency impacts

DHS Office of Inspector General Residential Child Care Unit inspects, monitors, licenses, registers and certifies ALL residential child care facilities in Georgia that meet the definition of:

- Child Placing Agencies (CPA)-89
- Child Caring Institutions-defined as 6 or more residents under 19 years of age (CCI)-175
- Outdoor Child Caring Programs (OCCP)-2
- Children's Transitional Care Centers (CTCC)-0
- Maternity Homes (MH)-13

House Resolution 1723: agency impacts

The Office of Provider Management contracts with and monitors agencies providing Room, Board and Watchful Oversight (RBWO) services for children in foster care.

This includes:

- 179 Child Caring Institutions (CCI)
- 71 Child Placing Agencies (CPA)

The foundational objective is to ensure that children in DFCS custody who are placed with these agencies are safe from abuse and neglect.

House Resolution 1723: proposals

Together Georgia proposed legislation:

- Create a task force made up of agency staff and providers to review forms, scheduling, licensing inspection activities and streamline any identified duplicative services by Dec. 31, 2015.
- Establish a "Child and Adolescent Services Regulatory Oversight Commission" that would analyze the licensure, inspection, monitoring/oversight of providers across all departments to reduce duplication of monitoring/oversight.
 - Made up of 11 members: 5 appointed by the Departments (DHS, DBHDD, DJJ, DCH, DOE), the Director of the Governor's Office of Children and Families and three providers and two parents or advocates appointed by the Governor.
 - The Commission will evaluate and implement the combination of all licensure activities (regulation and contracting) into one annual review process and combine inspections of incidents or allegations of abuse or neglect "when appropriate."
 - The Commission will work with agencies to change state regulations to comply with or accept requirements of national accrediting bodies so that the accreditation can be considered evidence of compliance except in incidences where the requirements for accreditation are less rigorous than state regulations.
 - The Commission will select a "multi-disciplinary team" utilizing staff and resources of each of the relevant departments to develop one streamlined annual inspection of provider agencies to cover compliance with rules and contractual terms.
 - "Core Service" multi-disciplinary teams would be deployed across the state to streamline annual inspections.
- The commission would be the central agency to respond to complaints or allegations of child abuse, neglect or noncompliance with departmental rules or regulations.

House Resolution 1723: next steps

DHS/DFCS next steps:

- **Sept. 23, 2014:** Meeting with Rep. Welch to discuss impacts of Together Georgia proposal.
- **Sept. 29, 2014:** Study Committee votes on final recommendations

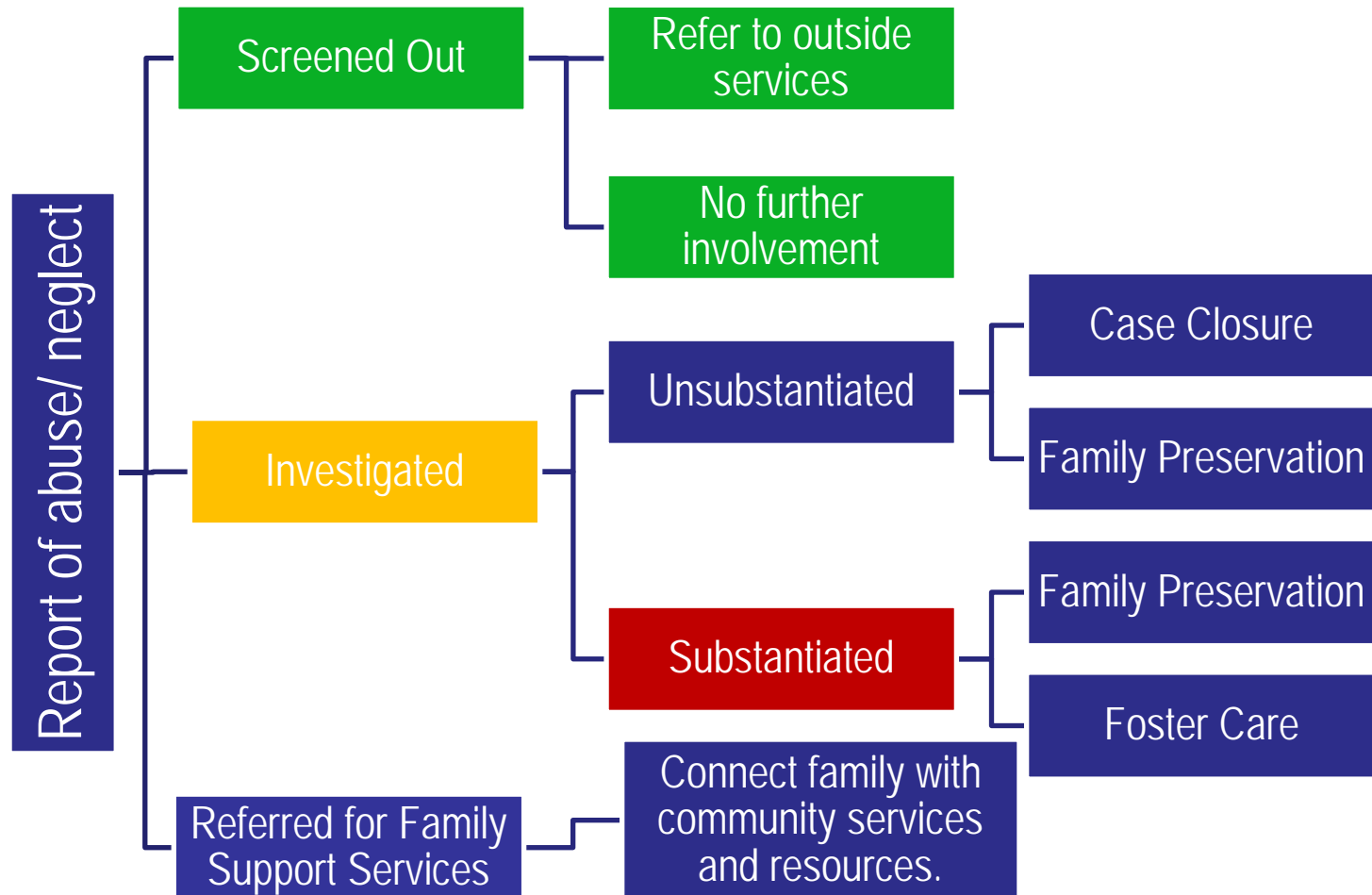
Senate Resolution 973: creation

Senate Child Protection Study Committee

Created as a response to proposals to privatize foster care services and to focus attention on child protective services.

- "... WHEREAS, ensuring the safety and welfare of Georgia's children is one of the most important functions of the State of Georgia; and...
- WHEREAS, more than 152 children under the care of the Division of Family and Children Services of the Department of Human Resources have died in recent years; and
- WHEREAS, the deaths of Eric Forbes and Emani Moss occurred in part because of deficiencies in the Child Protective Services Division of the Department of Human Resources; and
- WHEREAS, it is vital that our state child support services are capable of quickly identifying and assessing situations which pose a danger to children and of developing and implementing plans of family assistance and intervention in order to protect the lives and future of our children and prevent future tragedies..."

Senate Resolution 973: scope



Senate Resolution 973: scope

Topics:

- Staff background
 - Degree types for case managers
 - Certification requirements
- Staff support and morale
 - Training
 - Supervisory support
 - Access to community services for clients
- Staff salaries
 - Comparison with private sector and other states
- Workloads
 - Average caseload
 - Number of monthly reports of abuse and neglect, families served

Senate Resolution 973: scope

Experts:

- Bobby Cagle, Interim Director, Division of Family and Children Services
- Ashley Willcott, Director, Office of the Child Advocate
- Karl Lehman, President and CEO, ChildKind; member, Child Protective Services Advisory Committee
 - CPSA survey of DFCS staff
- National Association of Social Workers, Georgia Chapter
 - Workforce education
- Hon. Bradley J. Boyd, Chief Juvenile Court Judge, Fulton County
- Hon. Gerald Bruce, Chief Juvenile Court Judge, Lumpkin County
 - Judicial oversight

Senate Resolution 973: next steps

Final Meeting:

- *Sept. 22, 2014*: Judicial Oversight, Wrap up
 - Hon. Bradley J. Boyd, Chief Juvenile Court Judge, Fulton County
 - Hon. Gerald Bruce, Chief Juvenile Court Judge, Lumpkin County
- No potential legislation has been discussed or proposed, though members have expressed interest in exploring agency competitiveness with regard to employee retention

Senate Resolution 828: creation

Senate Study Committee on the Emergency Relocation of Abused Adults

“...WHEREAS, currently in Georgia, when personal care homes or other residential facilities are closed, there is not a consistent process in place for relocating the residents; and the lack of such a process hinders agencies involved with the relocation effort in transitioning residents from a substandard, abusive situation to a safe and secure environment.

- 1. Creates a multidisciplinary team to develop a protocol to be deployed every time an emergency relocation of residents is conducted.
- 2. Designates a lead agency, coordinator, and incident commander with the authority to undertake, direct, and coordinate all participating agencies on the scene of the relocation.

Senate Resolution 828: scope

Committee includes Governor appointees, three members of the House and three members of the Senate

Governor's appointees:

- Pat King, DAS Team Lead, Forensic Specialist
- Greg Tanner, Director, Georgia AARP
- Barbara Baxter, Licensed Nursing Home Administrator

- *Including input from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Department of Community Health Healthcare Facility Regulation, Long-Term Care Ombudsman*

Senate Resolution 828: scope

Topics:

- Developing a protocol for the multi-agency response to unlicensed personal care homes
- Budget impacts of “multi-agency response teams”
 - Adult Protective Services
 - Healthcare Facility Regulation
 - Georgia Bureau of Investigation
- Training needs for local law enforcement

Senate Resolution 828: next steps

Next steps:

- Finalizing protocol for agency response to present to committee in October meeting
- Providing budget estimates on costs for “multi-agency response teams”
- **Second meeting is in October at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center**
 - Provide access to law enforcement training on detection, investigation and prosecution of unlicensed personal care homes

Senate Resolution 881: creation

Senate Study Committee on the Senior Technology Gap

- “...WHEREAS, according to Pew Research studies, only 54 percent of Americans over age 65 have access to the Internet, and among those 77 and older, the proportion drops to about a third.
- “...WHEREAS, two-thirds of seniors surveyed by Accenture said access to health information is important, but only 28 percent have full access to their electronic health records, and almost 60 percent want to e-mail providers, but only 15 percent say they currently have that capability.
- “...WHEREAS, the technology gap is even greater among seniors on the lower end of the economic scale.
- “...WHEREAS, in order to serve the citizens of Georgia, it is vital that the General Assembly understand the problems seniors face and develop strategies to overcome such problems.

Senate Resolution 881: scope and next steps

Committee is traveling to Senior Centers throughout the state, seeking input from Seniors.

Cartersville:

- No input from Seniors due to late public notice
- Input from AT&T, AARP on efforts to close the gap for Seniors

Augusta:

- Sept. 29, Carrie J. Mays Family Life Center, 3pm

Macon:

- Oct. 14, 11am (TBA)