

**Child**r**en’s Cabinet Advisory Board Meeting**

**Unapproved Minutes**

**January 30, 2024**

**Member Name: Attendees**

Amanda Brunson Kathy Coleman

Gina Eubanks Julie Foster-Hagan

Annette Fruge Sarah Hinshaw-Fuselier

Chenier Montz Amanda Moody

Courtney Myers Ashley Politz

Marsha Shuler Ernise Singleton

Stephanie Sterling Karen Stubbs

Michael Victorian Kahree Wahid

Angela Wiggins-Harris Gina Womack

Lenell Young

**Staff:**

Jolie Williamson, Children’s Cabinet Executive Director

Michele M. Rabalais, Children’s Cabinet Executive Assistant

**Guests:**

Debbie Solcher

Holly Tupper

Sherrard Crespo, LCSW

Otha “Curtis” Nelson, JD

Courtney Myers

Desiree Hebert

**Welcome and Call to Order**:

ReShonn Saul, Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:14 a.m. and all present were welcomed. Ms. Saul introduced Jolie V. Williamson, Children’s Cabinet Executive Director.

**Roll Call:**

Michele M. Rabalais, Children’s Cabinet Executive Assistant, called roll.

**Approval of Minutes:**

A quorum was not present to approve minutes.

**Introduction of the Children’s Cabinet Director**:

Ms. Saul introduced Jolie V. Williamson, newly appointed Children’s Cabinet Executive Director.

**BCFS (formerly Baptist Child and Family Services)** **Health and Human Services – LA Unbound Now**:

Holly Tupper, Director, Unbound Now and Debbie Solcher, BCFS Common Thread presented on behalf of both of their organizations.

In 2022 Act 662 was passed by the Louisiana State Legislature and what that did was to create a care coordination model that mandated advocacy services here in Louisiana. BCFS and LA Unbound Now. Both organizations have contracted with DCFS (Departnent of Children and Family Services) to provide advocacy for survivors in Louisiana. Unbound Now covers the Baton Rouge and Orleans region(s) whereas BCFS is a statewide program and provides back up to region(s) 1 and 2.

Advocates use two evidence-based practices when dealing with survivors. These include: T.B.R.I. (Trust Based Relational Intervention) and Motivational Interviewing.

There is a 24/7 crisis line and services are offered to youth up to 18 years of age. Services are available 24/7 with approximately 12 youth per advocate.

Common Thread, a relational advocacy and case management program, is comprised of highly trained advocates, social workers and Survivors, providing long-term support to Survivors of trafficking. Operating with the understanding that long-term, dependable, positive adult relationships are the key to recovery.

BCFS Health and Human Services is a nonprofit established in 1944 specializing in community-based care for at-risk families and children, prevention and early intervention services, housing for young adults aging out of the foster care system, mental health and life skill services, advocacy and case management coordination for survivors of human trafficking, medical programs for women who are pregnant or post-partum, and once-in-a-lifetime experiences for families who have children with a disability or special need. For more than 79 years, BCFS Health and Human Services has profoundly impacted the lives of thousands of youth, children and families in a positive and caring way. Discussion followed.

**Louisiana Multi Agency Resource Center (LAMARC)**:

Deputy Secretary Curtis Nelson, Office of Juvenile Justice, along with Courtney Myers, Desiree Hebert and Sharon Francis discussed the Louisiana Multi Agency Resource Center (LAMARC). The mission of LAMARC is early intervention working with system involved youth.

The LAMARC program is an opportunity for the juvenile justice community to start addressing juvenile needs at the front end. Youth targeted are those that might have gotten arrested for low-level offenses or are just having problems at home, they all can funnel into this program where there they will be able to receive a quality needs assessment to figure out what are the needs and what exactly is going on with that young person.

Children and youth will be referred to these counselors around the parish including the schools, government employees, police, fire department as well as walk in appointments for families in need. Lafayette is being used as the pilot location. Discussion followed.

**Via Link/PCAL (Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana)**:

Sherrard Crespo, Director of Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana, presented on behalf of Via Link/PCAL.

Via Link provides crisis support, connects people to resources and services, and provides vital data and trend information to ensure policies and programs meet community needs.

Via Link is a nonprofit organization that provides a range of services to the people of Louisiana.  The organization provides counseling to those in crisis, helps people to connect with critical services, provides suicide intervention, opioid counseling and more.  These services are provided by phone, text, and online chat services 24/7, 365 days a year.

Via Link provides the following services:

1. 24/7 phone, text and chat lines are a safe space for anyone who is going through a hard time, having thoughts about suicide, or just needs to talk.

## Suicide Intervention: Part of VIA LINK’s suicide prevention work involves answering the 9–8–8 system for the 225, 504, and 985 area codes. VIA LINK specialists are available 24/7 to provide emotional support, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention. Callers can also receive referrals to local behavioral health agencies/facilities.

## Community Trainings: provides trainings for clinicians and community members on the topics of:  Crisis Intervention/De-Escalation, Trauma, Grief, Self-Care, Child Abuse Prevention, and Adverse Childhood Experiences Scale (ACES).

## Real Talk is a weekly support group that can be provided for schools or agencies who work with adolescents who may be experiencing students/clients with thoughts of suicide.  When contacted, VIA LINK can provide an 8-week support group for the selected group of adolescents.  The support group will provide a safe space to talk about what they’re really going through and to develop understanding of their suicide ideation and create coping mechanisms.

## Louisiana Parent Line: Louisiana Parent Line specialists can offer emotional support, de-escalation, crisis intervention, information & referral, and plans for coping. Follow up calls can also be offered to parents to increase their circle of support. The phone number is 833-LA-CHILD (833-522-4453) or parents can also text at (225) 424-1533.

## In addition to these services Via Link houses the Louisiana affiliate for Prevent Child Abuse America, Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL). PCAL provides outreach and advocacy as well as primary prevention to families throughout the state. Discussion followed.

## Subcommittee Updates:

Early Childhood Experience**:** Sarah Hinshaw-Fusilierreported that the Early Childhood Experience Committee continues to meet monthly. The focus remains on early childhood supports and services. Focusing on sustainability and looking at other funding resources. Discussion followed.

Behavioral Health Services for Children K-12**:** Marsha Shuler reported on behalf of the Behavioral Health Services for Children K-12 Committee.The committee continues to concentrate on a Medicaid state plan amendment which will make it easier for schools to participate in Medicaid in schools program. This will make it easier for schools to participate in the Medicaid in schools program to get health care and behavioral health care to the youth in schools. Discussion followed.

**Department/Agency Updates**: No updates

**Other Business**:

Cindy Bishop with the Childcare Association of Louisiana reported that there will be a childcare conference March 22-23, 2024 to be held at the West Baton Rouge Conference Center.

ReShonn Saul reported that she and the Children’s Cabinet Executive Director have a meeting scheduled with a state representative to discuss changes in the CCAB statute. In addition letters will be sent out to members who have missed at least three (3) consecutive meetings.

Ashley Politz announced that this would be her last CCAB Meeting as the representative of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Louisiana Chapter as she has accepted another position.

The Children’s Cabinet Executive Director introduced Ursula Anderson, Interim Director of the Louisiana Children’s Trust Fund.

**Public Comments:** No public comments**.**