

**ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**WARREN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**465 W 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 100, Front Royal, Virginia 22630**

**May 20, 2021**

The Advisory Board met in the Thermal Shelter of the Warren County Department of Social Services on January 21, 2021, with the meeting called to order at 4:02 PM by Mr. Jerome.

**Members in Attendance:** Lorraine Brandon, Stephen Jerome, and Brenda Wells

**Present for the Department:** Jon Martz, Director; Samantha Edwards, Assistant Director; Michelle Smeltzer, Community Liaison; April White, Family Services Supervisor; Kristen Strosnider, Benefit Programs Supervisor; Eric Jones, Benefit Programs Supervisor; Nichole Johns, Program Coordinator; Mikki Ewanish, Administrative Services Manager; Lisa Look, Fiscal Assistant; and Renee Pearson, Administrative Office Manager.

**County Officials:** Walter Mabe, Warren County Board of Supervisors

**Guests:** Linda Selover, Community Member

**Approval of Minutes**

Having no revisions to be made, a motion was made by Ms. Brandon to approve the January 21, 2021 minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Public Comments**

Ms. Selover offered her assistance in making sure meeting documents are publicly posted.

**Board of Supervisor Comments**

Mr. Mabe stated he has heard the agency is doing great things.

**Advisory Board Comments**

None

**Unit Reports**

***Eligibility Unit*** – presented by Kristen Strosnider.

For the month of April 2021, the Warren Department of Social Services received or processed the following:

## TANF

- Applications – 17
- Renewals – 10

## SNAP

- Applications Received – 90
- Applications Processed - 74
  - o Non-Expedited (30 day timeframe) – 55 (100% timeliness)
  - o Expedited (7 day timeframe) – 19 (100% timeliness)

## Medical Assistance

- Applications – 73 (Average processing time 19 days. Timeliness standard – 45 days)

## Auxiliary Grants

- Applications - 1

## Child Care

- Applications – 8
- Renewals – 1

## Crisis

- Applications – 1

Mr. Mabe asked what steps the agency takes to assist clients work towards self-sufficiency. Ms. Strosnider spoke about the work requirements for different programs. Also, due to the pandemic Federal and State regulations prevented the enforcement of any sanctions for non-participation and also did not allow cases to be closed. As a result our caseloads have increased dramatically over the past year.

Mr. Martz spoke of the support the agency has received from the Board of Supervisors, specifically the funding of a new position – Self-Sufficiency III position. This position will work directly with employers in the community to determine the skills they need from their prospective employees. The person in the position will then work with clients and community members who are unemployed or under-employed to gain the specific skills employers have stated they need.

## **Support Unit** – presented by Renee Pearson

### Phone calls/ Lobby visit for April 2021

- Total calls answered by Support staff - 1,279
- Total lobby visits - 662

## 2020 Totals

- Total phone calls answered by Support staff - 17,487
- Total lobby visits - 9,664

#### 2020 Averages

- Phone calls - 1,457 per month
- Lobby visits - 805 per month

#### EBT cards given in April

- 58 cards
- 2020 total cards – 834

#### Rent and Mortgage Relief Program

- This program is designed to support and ensure housing stability across the commonwealth during this pandemic. This includes rent or mortgage payments past due beginning April 1<sup>st</sup> and onward. It is a one-time payment with opportunity for renewal based on availability of funds and household need.

#### Cooling Assistance is starting soon.

- Applications are accepted June 15<sup>th</sup> through August 15<sup>th</sup>
- Assistance Available:
  - o Air conditioning unit (window) - purchase and install
  - o Air conditioning unit (central) - repair air conditioning unit or heat pump
  - o Electric bill - operate cooling equipment
  - o Security deposit – electric
- Eligibility Requirements:
  - o Must have cooling expense responsibility
  - o Household must include one vulnerable individual age 60 or older, disabled or under age six

Mr. Mabe stated he has been in our lobby countless times and has always been treated with respect and has received a warm welcome from staff even though they had no idea of his identity.

#### ***Community Liaison*** – presented by Michelle Smeltzer

Nights together - 182

Guests housed - 93

Bed nights - 3246

Loads of laundry - 520

Lbs. of food donated -14,400

Participating Churches - 15

Volunteer hours – 910

Paid hours - 4144

Mr. Mabe suggested the agency reach out about possibly housing a “pop-up” library.

**Services Unit** – presented by April White

April 2021

CPS Referrals

- 53 Received
- 25 accepted as Family Assessments
- 3 accepted as Investigations

APS Referrals

- 22 Received
- 20 accepted as Investigations

Permanency

- In Home Services – 9 families being served
- Children in Foster Care – 14

Two more children are moving towards Adoption! One is finishing a Report of Investigation to provide the Court (next to last step for finalization) and one is just waiting on the Final Order to be provided by the Court!

**Services Presentation** – April White gave a presentation about Mandated Reporting. (Presentation attached). Mr. Jerome asked Ms. White what are the four requirements of a valid report. Mr. Mabe inquired as to who in the community are mandated reporters. Ms. White indicated CPS guidance is public information and can be located on the VDSS public website.

### **Assistant Director’s Report**

Ms. Edwards reported the agency currently has nine vacancies but one verbal acceptance. Ms. Edwards also reported we have been able to promote from within which is the reason for several of the vacancies. Finally, Ms. Edwards stated every supervisor in the agency was at one time a worker in the agency and had been promoted from within.

### **Director’s Report**

Mr. Martz presented the work the agency has done surrounding discovering our “why”. All agencies and business can say what they do, many can tell you how they do it but very few can explain why they do what they do. In order to discover our why, the agency worked on identifying our core values. After identifying our core values the agency then designed a Coat of Arms for the agency based on images from heraldry which represent the core values. They are listed below:

**Blue** – Truth and Loyalty

**Gold** – Wisdom, Respect and Generosity

Butterfly – Empowering Change

Falcon – No Rest until the Objective is Achieved

Fire – Dedication and Protection

Lion – Hard Work and Resilience

Semper Ad Meliora – Always towards better things

The image is attached to this report.

The Leadership of the agency then worked on defining the “why” of the agency based on the core values. The agency “why” is as follows: Everything we do is designed to inspire positive change and empower the residents of Warren County to thrive, build resilience and promote wellbeing within our community.

The agency will be working on writing the agency mission statement next which will be followed by the agency vision statement.

### **County Administrator’s Report**

Mr. Daley was not able to attend the meeting. There was not a County Administrator’s Report at this time.

### **Adjournment**

Hearing no further business for discussion, Ms. Wells motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Brandon seconded the motion. Mr. Jerome adjourned the meeting at 5:18 PM. The next meeting will be held on July 15, 2021 at 4:00 PM.

## Warren DSS Symbolism



**Blue** – Truth and Loyalty

**Gold** – Wisdom, Respect and Generosity

**Butterfly** – Empowering Change

**Falcon** – No Rest Until the Objective is Achieved

**Fire** – Dedication and Protection

**Lion** – Hard Work and Resilience

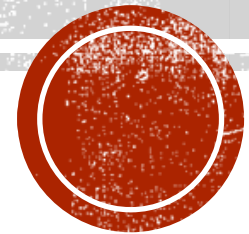
**Semper Ad Meliora** – Always towards better things

### Our Why:

Everything we do is designed to inspire positive change and empower the residents of Warren County to thrive, build resilience and promote wellbeing within our community.

# MANDATED REPORTERS

What do I need to know while I am working at WCDSS?

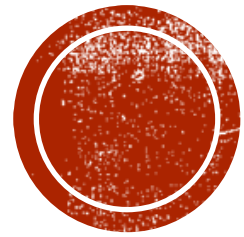


# THIS IS NOT A COMPLETE TRAINING

- This information is the “bare bones” information to present.
- IF ANY QUESTION OF ABUSE/NEGLECT EXISTS, CALL AND LET CPS FIGURE IT OUT
- Please feel free to ask Christie or April if you have more questions, or you can consult the Family Services Manual, Book C- Child Protective Services for more information
- There is a brochure called: A Guide For Mandated Reporters in Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect available in Services, please feel free to ask for one!







# **ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN**

**What can it look like?**

# PHYSICAL ABUSE

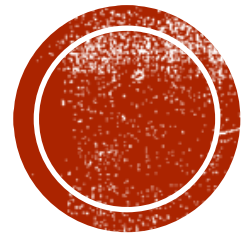
- There are several types of indicators of physical abuse: physical indicators, child behavioral indicators, and caretaker characteristics. These can include but are not limited to:
- Questionable bruises and welts
- Questionable cuts, scrapes, lacerations
- Child who is frightened of parents
- Child who is afraid to go home
- A caretaker who offers illogical, unconvincing, contradictory or no explanation for injuries
- A caretaker who attempts to conceal a child's injury or tries to protect identity of a person responsible.



# PHYSICAL NEGLECT

- There are several types of indicators of physical neglect: physical indicators, child behavioral indicators, and caretaker characteristics. These can include but are not limited to:
- Child is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- Child has consistent lack of supervision, especially when involved with dangerous activities or for long periods of time
- Child begs for or steals food or money
- Child states no one at home to provide care
- Caretaker may behave irrationally or in a bizarre manner
- Caretaker may appear to be indifferent to the child





# QUESTIONABLE PRACTICES

Are these considered Child Abuse?

# IS THIS CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT?

- Corporal punishment- This is LEGAL in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Injuring children is NOT legal. Excessive corporal punishment can easily result in injury. IF YOU AREN'T SURE- REPORT IT AND LET CPS FIGURE IT OUT.
- Unsupervised or “latchkey” kids. Virginia law does not set a specific age for supervision (or lack of). There are guidelines CPS follows in response, IF YOU AREN'T SURE-REPORT IT AND LET CPS FIGURE IT OUT
- School attendance- Truancy officers deal with school attendance, this does not count as a CPS concern in VA
- Unmet medical needs- Vaccinations are NOT mandatory for child. Well child exams are NOT mandatory...seeking needed medical care for illness/injury IS mandatory- IF YOU AREN'T SURE- REPORT IT AND LET CPS FIGURE IT OUT



# HOW TO REPORT A CPS CONCERN

- Are you in the office during normal business hours? Come see the Intake person and make your report. Any Services staff can tell you who is on Intake at that moment.
- Its after hours? Call the hotline! The number is 1(800) 552-7096
- You have to be put on hold? Use the mandated reporter portal! It is located at:

<https://vacps.dss.virginia.gov/>

**IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE  
DANGER, CALL 911**

