

VERMILION CTY. LOCAL AREA ACTION TEAM
MEETING MINUTES

DATE OF MEETING: 7/9/10

LOCATION: Danville Field Office

CONTACT PERSON: Beth Seggebruch

PARTICIPANTS: Judge Fahey, Judge Clary, Nancy Abbott (DCFS), Jackie Ward (DCFS), Lynda Morgan (DCFS), Trish Bratton (LSSI), Megan Martin (LSSI), Lindsey Weyhirsch (ASA), Rena Meents (ASA), Jacqueline Lacy (PD), Rebecca Parkhurst (PD), Mike O'Brien (private PD), Sarah Sorich (LSSI), Susan Perkins and Jessica Jordan (Prairie Center)

NOTES: Jacqueline Lacy the new Public Defender to Vermilion County was welcomed to the FTC meeting.

Susan Perkins from Prairie Center had recently attended a National Conference in Washington D.C. on drug courts—"Putting Drug Court in Reach of Every American that Needs It." Susan talked about her trip and handed out information from Maine and how they were dealing with issues/barriers and their particular program. She stated that there are rural family treatment courts in Maine. The program has an orientation phase of 60 days, they have an actual program coordinator for their FTC, and they have an actual handbook for the client and the PD's—which is quite lengthy. Some of the barriers that they encountered were lack of transportation due to the ruralness, low acceptance rate in the program, their sanctions are not consistent.

There are currently 5 clients in the current FTC program that are in various phases and most are in Phase I and one is in Phase II. This program needs to build capacity in order to be able to assist more clients to get clean, provide increased permanency to kids, and for program evaluation purposes. Judge Clary stated that everyone that has a substance abuse problem should be able to enter into the program and mental illness should not exclude someone from the program.

KEY DECISIONS: Prior to the next meeting in October (most likely) everyone is to have read Maine's Handbook and determine if there are things in the hand-book that we would like incorporated into our program.

Mental Health needs to be on board with our program to assist in coordinating services for our dually diagnosed clients. There are payment issues with our clients in trying to get medication. We will be trying to increase our client population in the program over the next several months. Cases need to come to the attention of the Judge somehow through whatever venue and then the Judge can make the final decision on acceptance. The cases

can be prioritized and those that need the services first will get them, should there end up being an issue of resources.

Discussion was held regarding 'sponsorship' of current clients by successful graduated clients. Judge Fahey was questioning if some of the successful graduates would be able to be invited to various groups at P.C. as a type of support for those that are current FTC clients. This would give the newer FTC clients a glimpse at the program from someone that has been through it and had their kids returned. It would be beneficial if the new FTC clients would maybe be able to call a former FTC client for help, support and questions. Jessica said that she would call a couple of the graduates and see if they would be willing to do this.

BARRIERS: Lack of clients in the program is still an issue. Financial issues with clients in obtaining prescribed medications is a big barrier right now. GAL-John Halloran will be leaving and it is unknown at this time who will be replacing him. He has been a great supporter of the FTC program.

The issue of Due Process was brought up by the public defenders office—if a client is in the program do they waive their rights to due process? Discussion was had discussing this issue.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Just looking at the data that we have it appears the program has at least a 50% success rate at this time. Jamie (graduate from program) went with Judge Clary to an AMBUCS meeting and she talked about her experience in FTC and her success of getting her children returned home.

FOLLOW-UP: Get more clients in the program. Let the States Attorney know if you have a potential client, let Prairie Center know about clients, let the Judge know of possible clients, if you have a potential FTC client let Jessica know at PC and she will get them assessed quicker to determine if they are appropriate, investigations can make referrals to the program and then the Judge can make the final decision-this could be done at the shelter care hearing, intact cases with legal should be referred as well.

ASSIGNED TASKS:

1. Everyone is to have reviewed Maine's Family Treatment Handbook prior to the next meeting (TBA) to determine if there is anything additional that they would like to see added to our current hand-book/program.
2. Judge Clary and Susan Perkins will be speaking with Tom P. from Crosspoint to see if the agency will be engaged in our FTC meetings for purposes of coordination of services with our common clients.
3. Beth will send out an e-mail to DCFS/POS staff regarding putting additional clients in the FTC program.
4. Jessica will inquire with previous graduates about attending some P.C. meetings to assist with support of the program.
5. Beth will e-mail Judge Fahey middle/end of September to determine a date.
6. Everyone is encouraged to be PRO-ACTIVE about the referring clients

NEXT MEETING: TBA—Judge Fahey will provide available dates in October.