

The Joint CalWORKs Committee Report

California Mental Health Director's Association

California Welfare Directors Association

County Alcohol and Drug Program Administrators Association of
California

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Joint Committee Report

Background

Changes in federal and state legislation presented California Counties with a very significant new challenge: the transformation of sixty years of welfare law, programs, and staff culture into job training and employment programs. Both federal and state law created a new vision of welfare from income maintenance to “work responsibility”. Federal law devolves the responsibility for design and implementation. In turn, California law devolves the responsibility to counties. It is the county that must develop operational models and programs to make welfare reform work.

Recognizing the need to work across county departments to successfully meet this new challenge, the Joint CalWORKs Committee was created in the fall of 1998, and is comprised of county representatives from the California Mental Health Director’s Association (CMHDA), the County Alcohol and Drug Program Administrators Association of California (CADPAAC) and the California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA). The Committee’s purpose is to work jointly on issues affecting CalWORKs participants who have mental health, alcohol and other drug, and domestic violence barriers to employment. It is co-chaired by three county directors, one from each of the organizations involved.

The Joint CalWORKs Policy Committee meets monthly, and is attended by staff from the State Departments of Social Service, Mental Health and Alcohol and Drug Programs as well as county staff and other involved agencies and stakeholders.

The goals and objectives of the Joint Policy Committee include:

- Policy Development and Recommendations
- Information Sharing
- Promotion of Best Practices
- Program and Fiscal Advocacy
- Oversight of the CalWORKs Project

Major Accomplishments

Collaborative Effort

This Committee is unique in its structure, with representatives from the top executive levels within the various county departments. It represents one of the first statewide efforts to deal with a major human service reform in a collaborative, interagency manner.

In particular, the committee has fostered the development of a number of first-time joint efforts:

- This has been the first time that CMHDA, CADPAAC, and CWDA have combined committees to address an issue of importance to all three associations.
- The domestic violence community has generally been an absent partner in discussions of policy and practice regarding the TANF population. The Joint Committee has welcomed and encouraged participation from the domestic violence community. Their presence has led to enhanced understanding of domestic violence issues and their impact on welfare reform among the members of the Committee from social services, mental health, and alcohol and other drug.
- The Committee has endorsed the development of a CWDA/Children and Families Subcommittee and CADPAAC working group to explore the interrelationships between parents with alcohol and drug problems in the Child Welfare system and their implications for CalWORKs. The intent is to develop policies and share information on models and practice which can better meet the needs of child welfare clients with alcohol and other drug problems who are also affected by the CalWORKs legislation. This subcommittee has met with support from the Stuart Foundation's grant to Children and Family Futures to work on alcohol and drug and child welfare policy issues in the state.
- The Committee has incorporated representation and information from the employment services community. In particular it has social services directors who have the JTPA/PIC responsibility within their counties. These individuals could thus receive funds for employment activities from TANF, JTPS (WIA), and Department of Labor Welfare to Work programs. Through this interaction the Committee has been able to adopt a position paper about supported employment. A copy of this document is included in the Appendix.

Collaborative Values and Principles

In the course of the Joint Committee's work, it became clear that a common understanding of the values that underlie the separate service systems was a necessary step to enable joint resolution of policy and practice issues. Using the CADPAAC Women, Family, and Welfare Reform Committee's "Values and Working Principles" document, feedback from counties and the results of the collaborative values inventory completed by committee members, the following is a composite statement of collaborative values and principles. This document has been reviewed by the three County Associations and adopted by the Joint Committee. The final draft is included in the Appendix.

Committees/Working Groups

The Joint Committee has created three workgroups to deal with specific issues:

Data Subcommittee

The Data Subcommittee was established to recommend to the Committee a routine reporting system that would document over time the costs, utilization, and effectiveness of AOD, MH, and DV services for CalWORKs participants. Membership on the committee came from the State Departments of Social Services, Alcohol and Drug Programs, and Mental Health and from representatives of the comparable county departments. The Subcommittee established three working principles:

1. Use existing data sources and existing reporting mechanisms wherever possible.
2. Develop the system incrementally.
3. Data to be collected and reported by state agencies with the support of CADPAAC, CMHDA, CWDA, and organizations representing the DV programs.

The Subcommittee explored the possibility of using the DSS Welfare to Work 25 reporting system to track the number of referrals for service and the numbers of participants actually receiving services. Because the form was not designed as a tracking instrument, the Subcommittee determined that the variability in the ways in which this data is being collected and reported by counties would make it an unreliable and potentially misleading mechanism for the reporting of data on a statewide basis.

Both the state Departments of Mental Health and of Alcohol and Drug Programs will have the capacity to gather reliable information on the usage of services by CalWORKs clients by FY 00-01.

Based on the above information the Committee decided to pursue two data approaches:

- Work with the state Departments of Mental Health and Alcohol and Drug Programs to develop routine ways of gathering utilization information.
- Work with a small, but representative, set of counties on the development of a set of definitions for reporting information.

CPS Practice Issues

The initial meeting of this workgroup was on June 24, 1999 and focused on taking stock of California's current situation and the recent history of efforts to improve connections between AOD and child welfare services. Interest was expressed by both associations in

continuing work on this topic on an on-going basis. Specific tasks for the workgroup were identified including:

- An inventory and method to disseminate model programs that are being implemented across the state
- Development of a follow-up conference to the December 1998 San Diego meeting of county AOD and CW administrators to be held on May 3 & 4, 2000
- An in-depth discussion and development of common principles among the two associations
- Development of common outcomes across these service areas

To date, two subsequent meetings of the work group have been held. A matrix of model programs was developed with input from the two associations' members. The matrix is posted to the Children and Family Futures website (www.cffutures.com) in a beginning effort to identify models and to disseminate program information across counties.

The workgroup has developed the program for a Spring 2000 statewide conference on AOD issues in child welfare. The conference is intended to bring together a state-level and county teams to develop priorities for action in developing better collaborative relationships across service systems, improving access to AOD services, improving treatment engagement and retention, improving services to children, filling information gaps, and exploring funding mechanisms to finance system improvements. There have been extended discussions on common principles and developing outcomes across the service systems. These principles are in the Appendix, and have been the subject of portions of the last two meetings of the workgroup.

The workgroup will hold its next meeting after the Spring conference to ensure that state and county efforts are sustained.

CDSS Protocols Workgroup

The Protocols workgroup was created to work with CDSS to create a protocol for serving CalWORKs recipients with mental health and alcohol and other drug barriers. The protocol is intended to provide information to local welfare department, mental health, alcohol and drug administrators, managers and staff about the barriers to effective systems for referral and assessment of AOD and MH issues and strategies for overcoming these barriers. The group was comprised of representatives from the three state agencies (CDSS, ADP and DMH) as well as county representatives from the three program areas.

A draft of the protocol was completed and circulated to the CalWORKs Joint Committee members and the three Associations for review and comment. Also, as part of the review process, three counties volunteered to hold focus group to discuss the draft protocol and provide feedback to the workgroup. This process was completed and the protocol was

distributed to all County Welfare Directors and CalWORKs Welfare to Work Coordinators on February 28,2000 in All County Information Notice I-16-00.

Information Sharing and Promising Practices

One of the major goals of the committee is to provide a forum for the exchange of a wide range of information related to CalWORKs, including legislation, policies and practices. Related to this goal, the Joint Committee has facilitated the development and distribution of promising practices.

The Committee developed a format for describing these practices. Counties submit policies and practices that they have developed for dealing with specific issues. Wide dissemination of these practices has been encouraged. Committee members take them back to share with their associations and counties, they are presented at conferences and multiple county meetings and they may be put on appropriate websites. Copies of all submissions to date are included in the Appendix of this report.

In addition to compiling Promising Practices, the Committee schedules various presentations at the monthly meetings. Over the past year these have included topic such as Values, Workforce Investment Act and Welfare to Work Grants, Domestic Violence Issues, Child Welfare Issues, Marketing Tools and Strategies, and Supported Employment. The Committee has also heard presentations on the CalWORKs Project's Six County Case Study Report. The Executive Summary of that report is included in the Appendix."

Finally, in this area, the Committee has provided a mechanism for the relatively rapid collection of survey information from counties. For example, the Committee worked with the CalWORKs Project to conduct a referral, assessment and service utilization survey in December 1998, and in the Fall of 1999 completed a survey of anticipated CalWORKs expenditures for 1999/2000.

Oversight of The CalWORKs Project

The Joint Committee provides oversight for The CalWORKs Project, a collaborative effort by the California Institute for Mental Health (CIMH), Children and Family Futures (CFF) and the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) to study the implementation of CalWORKs in California counties as it relates to the identification, referral and delivery of MH, AOD and DV services to CalWORKs participants, when these issues are barriers to employment. Information gained from the study activities is then developed into technical assistance for all counties. The Project is funded in part by California counties from their MH and AOD allocations, as well as foundation funding from the David and Lucile Packard, the California Wellness Foundations, and a research grant from the

National Institute of Justice. The Joint Committee provides advice and input to the Project, in addition to review and comment upon project documents and work products.

Major Recommendations

Addressing the Joint Committee's goal of making recommendations in the areas of program and policy, the Committee is recommending the following actions:

- The Legislature and Administration should continue the CalWORKs allocations for Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) and Mental Health (MH) at current levels.
- The Legislature and Administration should provide a specific allocation for Domestic Violence services in addition to the AOD and MH allocations.
- Domestic Violence CalWORKs funds expended at the local level must be pursuant to a plan developed by the Local Welfare Director in collaboration with the county agency responsible for domestic violence services, or where there is not a local county agency, with local Domestic Violence Providers. The local Welfare Director should assure overall coordination of these services with the local Mental Health Director and the AOD Administrator.
- The Administration should expand access to CalWORKs AOD and MH funds by defining "needy family" to include families who are "at-risk" of needing income assistance based on their level of poverty and those families whose children are involved with the child welfare system. These families should have access to CalWORKs support services, including mental health, alcohol and drug abuse services through CalWORKs.
- The Legislature and Administration should ensure that parents in "child only" cases can access the full range of support services through the CalWORKs funds. Child only cases include those with relative guardians and those beyond the five-year limit.
- The Legislature and Administration should provide that persons who are exempt from CalWORKs Welfare To Work requirements are able to access CalWORKs funding for mental health and AOD support services.
- The Legislature and Administration should assure that local Department of Social Services Directors have the flexibility to permit the use of CalWORKs funds, including mental health and AOD allocations, for capital outlay projects, particularly as needed to provide supported living environments.

- The Legislature and Administration should approve legislation that ensures that persons, otherwise eligible for CalWORKs, who were convicted of drug-related felonies for use or possession have access to income support, substance abuse treatment, child care, transportation, vocational and employment, and other support services through CalWORKs funding mechanisms.
- State agencies should partner with counties in assuming responsibility and financial support for providing technical assistance to counties and providers on MH, AOD, & DV services to CalWORKs recipients. This TA should include wider dissemination of models and best practices in implementing CalWORKs.
- Appropriate State agencies, in collaboration with county welfare, mental health, and AOD departments, should develop a statewide system to gather routine statewide data about mental health and AOD prevalence rates, clients referred, services provided, rates, and outcomes.
- State agencies should review current and prospective evaluations for tracking of long-term outcomes for CalWORKs clients to determine whether these evaluations will provide adequate information on the status of parents and their children who have left the CalWORKS system, including those who have left CalWORKs through sanctions.
- Counties should be encouraged to ensure that families who are sanctioned or at risk of sanction due to non-compliance are assessed and offered services for MH, AOD, and DV barriers in order to achieve their re-engagement with welfare-to-work activities.
- State agencies, including higher education, in partnership with counties, should assume responsibility for the development of recruitment and staff development training programs to assure culturally relevant services, including ethnic and linguistic diversity in the service delivery system.

Future of the Committee

The Joint Committee has agreed to meet monthly through the end of calendar year 2000. Following this, the Committee will decide how frequently meetings are needed to coordinate policy and practice issues, enable tracking of data and ensure continuation of funding.

Joint Committee Report Appendix

[Supported Employment Concept Paper](#) (Link to PDF document at CIMH Website)

[Collaborative Values and Principles](#) (Link to PDF document at CIMH Website)

[Promising Practices](#) (Link to PDF document at CIMH Website)

[Mental Health and Substance Abuse Protocol](#) (Link to PDF Document at Department of Social Services)

[Help Connections, Volumes #1-3](#) (Link to CalWORKs page at CIMH Website)

[Executive Summary, CalWORKs Project-Six County Case Study](#) (Link to PDF document at CalWORKs page at CIMH Website)