



MPHA Policy Forum Notes
A Community of Caregiving: For the Children
November 8, 2013

Moderator:

- Ken Bence, Director of Public Health , State Public Programs division of Medica Health Plans
 - Opening Remarks
 - New location at the New Brighton Community Center!
 - Many people have had to miss work due to a sick child and have had to juggle schedules
 - For a person without an understanding employer, having a sick child can be a legitimate crisis

Panel:

- Mary Kelsey, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Licensing Division
- Ann McCully, Executive Director of Child Care Aware of Minnesota
- Mark Suggs, Community Liaison at Bel Air Elementary in New Brighton

Opening Commentary by panelists:

- Mary Kelsey
 - Licensing Fact Sheet on Table (find on website at <http://mn.gov/dhs/>)
 - 1600 licensed childcare facilities in Minnesota. 10300 family and group family childcare homes in Minnesota (this number has decreased)
 - There is a staff of only 5 people at HHS to oversee licensing inspections, investigate complaints, etc.
 - A 2011 report identified trend in temporary or immediate suspension (most serious) including 8 that resulted from infant deaths.
 - 2 infant deaths since 2012 with one being from safe sleep.
 - New providers interested in getting licensed require more training than before. To continue licensing requirements include more training as well
 - Safe Sleep Campaign. Governor made proclamation for Safe Sleep Week. Drew attention to topic
- Ann McCully
 - 14 agencies across the state
 - Help parents find childcare in community, improve quality of existing childcare (professional development, grants, etc) work on public policy
 - Point out that childcare is economic issue: parents need to go to work, children are the future workforce, childcare centers are small businesses.

- School- readiness: need to show where money is going. Working with childcare providers to show this
- Who are they? Home childcare providers: nearly all female, average age 44, 94% are white, 27% have been in field 20+ years, 64% report that have no degree higher than HS education
- Mark Suggs
 - Bel Air Elementary: 800 kids and growing, 40+ nationalities, 50% free/reduced lunch
 - He work with families doing home visits if attendance issues or academic issues
 - School is starting all-day kindergarten next year
 - He meets with each child at least once during course of year
 - 8 years ago began Snack-Pack program where send foods home with children who may struggle with foods over weekend
 - Before send item home with child, check with family to maintain dignity of family.
 - Elementary has started a college fair for students to start excitement early

Panel Discussion:

Q1: What are your thoughts on how the movement to unionize childcare workers will affect childcare providers?

Mary:

- The union will want to participate in stakeholder discussion.

Ann:

- Organization is neutral on issue. Providers are divided on issue. Nervousness about getting involved in something new. May lose some providers who are really opposed to that.

Mark:

- Know of many families who do in-home childcare. These individuals really wish had more subsidies for families who need assistance.

Q2: What do you believe about the fact that the workforce is less diverse than the children they are serving?

Ann:

- Intentional effort to bring more diverse populations into childcare. Statistics were statewide. Also have large number of providers who receive subsidies who provide childcare but are not licensed (don't have money, etc). Family, friends, and neighbors.

Q3: Is there a movement to include training to include more diverse backgrounds?

Mary:

- Licensing provisions are required to complete cultural diversity training, but don't have curriculum right now. Currently working on developing.

Q4: Staff in childcare facilities often work long hours, how can it impact longevity in field?

Mark:

- It does begin to ware one down. Knows of families which have stopped doing childcare because of this reason. Christ the King Lutheran Church has an after-school program that does have staff that rotates. People who work there tend to be younger and work longer.

Ann:

- Family Childcare providers often don't have others to help. Some centers have 24hour care. Professional development courses are hard for those to get to with long hours, although they do have online courses available.

Mary:

- This is often the environment when lapses in supervision occur.

Q5: Is cultural competence measured?

Ann:

- Not a State-Identified program (yet). Need to use a portion of funds to reflect multiple cultures. There are some programs already out there. Parent Aware: are you talking about diet, cultural. Work with parents- talk to when enter program.

Q6: Is there a place where families can look up how childcare facilities compare to each other?

Ann:

- Parent Aware- quality rating and improvement system. Can look across all settings: Health and Safety, Assessing child progress, etc. Gives chance to find childcare from an objective opinion.

Mary:

- There is also a Licensing Look-Up site although Family childcare doesn't have correction orders listed online so have to contact County for that information.

Mark:

- Families at school often talk with the Dean of Students who can help them find childcare. Mostly found through word-of-mouth.

Q7: When a sudden need arises for a family, how is that supported?

Mary:

- Sick-care programs are available. Licensing regulations do require children with certain illnesses be excluded from childcare.

Ann:

- Some companies may also pay for sick-care programs- contract with certain programs. Need to help employers understand that children get sick and parents need flexibility. Don't want parents to be so desperate.

Q8: How are individuals who choose to be exempt from immunization dealt with in childcare facilities?

Mary:

- Some providers choose not to accept children who aren't immunized.

Mark:

- In schools it is OK, but many of the families that do in-home childcare won't accept that child.

Q9: How are cost, income disparities and subsidies addressed?

Ann:

- Far more family childcare programs in MN. \$8,000 for childcare in rural MN, compared to \$16,000 for childcare in urban MN. Approximately 7,000 children are on waitlist for childcare.
- Childcare Assistance is available as well as scholarships. Available through Parent Aware if rated. Especially available for the year, or two years before kindergarten.

Q10: Is the school curriculum changing to include growing diversity of children?

Mark:

- School focuses on the fact that not everyone gets to the finish line the same way. Work with individuals on individual level. Have had to work with the Somali population because they often keep children very close and it is harder to build trust. Can work with information provided by Childcare Aware.

Q11: Have other states adopted unionization of childcare providers and what does it say about the movement here in Minnesota?

Ann:

- Some states are Illinois, Washington, Oregon, and others. Shows that it is a big movement. In Illinois, felt that the unionization played large role in the increase in subsidies. Also shows that the movement isn't going to go away.

Q12: MPHA has highlighted the issue of Health in All Policies. One important aspect is mental health. What is being done to highlight this issue for childcare providers for themselves and for children?

Ann:

- Center for Inclusive Childcare points out early warning flags of mental health in children. The Thrive Initiative also looks at mental health, but have found that those in rural areas might not have what need to help. Parent Aware is also working to help parents get what they need.

Q13: What emerging issues will bring change to what you do?

Mark:

- Child hunger. Have seen an increase in the Snack-Pack program: in 8 years have seen the number of children who need help rise from 36 to 87. Often, the most nutritious meals that students receive are those they get in school. Working on growing the Snack-Pack program (which is reviewed 4 times a year by a nutritionist) which also feeds all children in each family.

Ann:

- People are often looking for a return on investment when they are investing in childcare (especially looking for more immediate information). Need to make sure that don't move too quickly. Will also need to be more careful about unintended consequences, examples are the CPR and basic training for subsidies, but have found that fewer people are completing these requirements.

Mary:

- Will be focusing on program integrity. Need to increase the accountability of providers.

Next MPHA Policy Forum
A Community of Caregiving: For Aging Parents
Jan. 10th, 2014