

KENTUCKY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DELIVERY SYSTEM TASK FORCE

Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the 2023 Interim

October 16, 2023

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 5th meeting of the Kentucky Health & Human Services Delivery System Task Force was held on October 16, 2023, at 2:00 PM in Room 171 of the Capitol Annex. Representative David Meade, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Stephen Meredith Co-Chair; Representative David Meade Co-Chair; Senators Shelley Funke Frommeyer, and Amanda Mays Bledsoe; Representatives Kimberly Poore Moser, and Amy Neighbors.

Guests: Eric Friedlander, Secretary, Cabinet for Health & Family Services; Lesa Dennis, Commissioner, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health & Family Services; Todd Trapp, Director, Division of Family Support, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health & Family Services; Tatiana Rose; and Amanda Nichols.

LRC Staff: Samir Nasir and DJ Burns.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the September 26, 2023, minutes was made by Senator Meredith, seconded by Representative Moser, and approved by a voice vote.

Discussion of Public Assistance Benefits and Application Processing

Eric Friedlander, Secretary, Cabinet for Health & Family Services (CHFS), discussed the increase in support service tasks for Department of Community Based Services (DCBS) employees and the training of new staff members contributing to the increase in tasks.

Lesla Dennis, Commissioner, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for

Health & Family Services, discussed the contributing factors in the increase in tasks for DCBS employees including the Public Health Emergency (PHE) unwinding and an increase of average daily tasks of approximately 360 and the transition from local to statewide distribution of tasks.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Moser, Secretary Friedlander stated that CHFS has had a personnel cap since 2017 for state funded positions within the cabinet and except for the Office of the Inspector General, the agency has met the personnel cap. Commissioner Dennis stated that the workflow of the contract staff within TEKsystems does limit the types of issues they can solve, in cases where a client needs to be transferred to a DCBS worker, there may be duplication in restating information to a different employee. Mr. Trapp stated that the TEK staff work from a list of tasks and some duplication can occur down the line with other employees. Secretary Friedlander stated that some TEK staff have been transitioned to full time DCBS employees. Mr. Trapp stated that TEKsystems staff is only processing Medicaid renewal cases. Secretary Friedlander stated that Kentucky has an integrated eligibility and enrollment system which works 90 percent of the time to streamline the process.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Meredith, Secretary Friedlander stated that he is unsure how long the statewide processing will be in effect, as it depends on how quickly the backlog in bigger counties takes to bring current. Commissioner Dennis stated that the locality premium for Jefferson County is given based on the influx of non-English speaking clients and the number of in-person clients the office helps daily. Secretary Friedlander stated that the Jefferson County waiting area has two floors and both floors are full daily. Secretary Friedlander stated that he hopes when the backlog is caught up that Jefferson and Fayette counties will no longer be behind as they have been in the past. He stated that Conduent has been helpful with wait times on the phones. Commissioner Dennis stated that some of the frustrations with DCBS employees and Conduent come from clients being transferred to a DCBS employee and having to restate all their information. She stated DCBS is constantly asking for feedback from front line employees on what is working and what isn't. Mr. Trapp stated that there are monthly tracking report meetings with Conduent on call volume and transfers to DCBS to help learn and change processes to better assist clients faster. Commissioner Dennis stated that CHFS is currently looking into other vendors for the KYNECT system. Secretary Friedlander stated that he hopes to be current in the backlog by February 2024.

Tatiana Rose discussed her personal experiences with her son on home and community based waivers and technical issues she has had.

Amanda Nichols, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health & Family Services, discussed employee morale within DCBS.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Neighbors, Secretary Friedlander stated that he could get the information on complaints received since implementing the state wide processing.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Moser, Secretary Friedlander stated that the cabinet has increased the psychiatric residential treatment facilities (PRTF) rates to help with the placement of children in CHFS care. He stated that three children across the state are staying in state offices without placement.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Meredith, Secretary Friedlander stated that he is happy to discuss a hybrid model for Jefferson County cases to help bring the backlog current.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Funke Frommeyer, Secretary Friedlander stated that CHFS is always looking for families to provide foster care.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:21 PM.