CCWRO New Welfare NEWS

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In Brief

✓ **CWDA Children's Committee has monthly meeting and monthly pre-meeting conference calls with CDSS.** According to the California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), its Services Committee will be having monthly meeting with Bruce Wagstaff, Deputy Director for Children Services and a monthly pre-meeting telephone call with Mr. Wagstaff. While DSS has time to hold two meetings a month with counties, no monthly meetings are being held with the representatives of the consumers of the CDSS programs. Right now consumers have three (3) meeting a year without any pre-meeting conferences.

✓ **Quarterly Reporting (QR) Data Being Collected.** Several counties, including Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, are involved in QR data collection. The list of counties collecting this data should be available from CDSS.

✓ **QR Task Force is back.** Counties have been having problems with QR and have asked CDSS to reconstitute the QR task force. The first meeting of the Task force was held on February. The meeting was closed to the public, although it is financed with public funds.

✓ **Medi-Cal and QR.** Department of Health Services is concerned about Medi-Cal ineligibility when cash linkage ends but the family remains on aid due to QR rules. This phenomenon occurs generally when a parent working over 100 hours returns home or the youngest child ages out. DHS wants counties to provide them with estimates of how often this occurs.

✓ **CDSS will be revising BW 2166 (Work Pays) form.** This form will be revised in order to be consistent with QR reporting. Counties are asked to provide input for changes they may want when revising the form. Representatives of the participants were not asked for input.

✓ **AB 205 being reviewed by Health & Human Services Agency.** AB 205, which took effect January 1, 2005, related to registered domestic partners, has not been implemented yet. It is held up by agencies outside of CDSS. Counties have been told by CDSS that they cannot implement AB 205 until told. DSS has also said that AB 205 may be retroactive, but they are not sure.

✓ **IEVS and QR.** At a 1/6/04 CWDA meeting counties asked DSS how does QR interact with IEVS. A work group was set up on this issue and it has meet once. Advocates were again excluded from this workgroup. For more Maria Hernandez of CDSS of 916-654-1322.

In-Kind Income can be used to meet IHSS Share of Cost.

In the IHSS program if the recipients income requires a share-of-cost (SOC), such cost can be meet through in-kind income.

On 1/7/02, Alan G. Organ of Fresno County asked DSS: "Where the provider and recipient, can a SOC obligation be meet through in-kind payment (e.g. room and board)?

On 8/19/02 Bruce Clark of DSS responded that "A SOC payment may be met through in-kind payment." The answer goes on to elaborate that Industrial Welfare Commission (IWC) Order No. 15-2001 provides such a valuation. The IWC requires a written agreement between the provider and recipient in order to credit room and board for wages.

CalWIN News

CalWIN is a new computer system that will be operating in 18 California County welfare departments. Placer County was the first county to start a new computer system which was tried in Colorado. The system has major problems for the recipient, applicants and welfare workers.

Colorado's system version .3 was a disaster and notwithstanding all of the improvements that EDS has made.

In a recent news release the Associated Press reported:

Welfare application backlog grows since December

Friday February 11, 2005

DENVER (AP) The number of pending applications for welfare benefits has increased since December when a judge ordered the state to reduce a backlog caused by a new computer system.

Denver District Judge John Coughlin gave the state until Feb. 28 to reduced its backlog of 29,351 welfare cases by 40 percent. The backlog now stands at roughly 29,700.

``We still have a way to go, but things are more positive than negative,'' said Karen Reinertson, executive director of Health Care Policy and Financing, one of two state agencies that distribute benefits to the state's needy.

Public-interest lawyers sued the state over the $200 million Colorado Benefits Management System that went on-line in September and slowed payments to the state's 600,000 people who receive some sort of assistance.

Reinertson said the backlog has grown each day but 55 percent of the cases backlogged as of December have been processed. The number of new cases that missed federal deadlines fell from 12,000 in December to 9,000 in January.

CalWIN coming to your county

5/05 -	Santa Cruz/Yolo
6/05	Santa Clara
7/05	Solano
8/05	Contra Costa
9/05	Sonoma
10/05	San Mateo
11/05	San Francisco
12/05	Alameda
1/06	Tulare
2/06	Orange
3/06	Santa Barbara
4/06	San Luis Obispo
5/06	San Diego
6/06	Fresno

One major lesson from Sacramento county is the fact that workers who went through the training program were really never trained in that there was no indepdendent certification that the person was trained.

A call center set up to help those in emergency need of food, shelter or medications benefit emergencies logged 754 calls."

Our sources in Placer County tell us that the computer was spitting out a bunch of notices and people were lined up at the office trying to find what do these notices mean? One says aid has been approved. The other one says it was denied. And another one says the benefits have been decreased. Yet another notice states that benefits have been increased - and all these notices went to one person. Many others had similar problems.

The implementation of CalWIN is causing widespread violations of state and federal laws.

One of the most basic laws being violated will be the laws governing emergency assistance in the form of Food Stamp expedited services and CalWORKs Immediate Need.

Sacramento will be going live 3/3/05. Advocates in Sacramento will be closely monitoring the county compliance with the law.

PRACTICE TIP: Welfare advocates should start meeting with their counties to see how the county will implement CalWIN and comply with the law. One major lesson from Sacramento County is the fact that workers who went through the training program were really never trained in that there was no independent certification that the person was trained. All trainees certified that they were training. There were no verification that the individual could operate the system.

In February, 2005, Sacramento County did a "mock" CalWIN and it was a disaster. Allegedly trained workers had no idea when they were doing.

CCWRO has contacted CDSS about this looming problem. We hope somebody stops this disaster. Of course the victims will be the customers of the county welfare department. We have been told by county employees that Sacramento welfare department has instructed county staff not to talk to the press.

TANF REAUTHORIZATION UPDATE

House Hearings on HR 240

On February 11, 2005, Congressman Wally Herger of California held hearings on his HR 240. As were reported in our previous Bulletin, in the Republican controlled "democracy" the people do not participate. Only the chosen ones were allowed to speak in the undemocratic House of Representatives.

The people testifying were mostly supporters of HR 240.

The hearing began with **Wally Herger,** Republican Chairman of the Human Resources Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee talking about what a great success TANF has been.

The next speaker was **Jim McDermott** (D) from the State of Washington, who is the ranking member of the subcommittee.

Mr. McDermott gave a more honest assessment of what is happening in America. He said that 44 million Americans do not have health care. "Every 30 seconds in America, the richest, most powerful nation on earth, someone declares bankruptcy because they have simply fallen sick."

Mr. McDermott suggested that TANF should stand for Towards A New Future". He also said that the CBO has estimated that child care need for TANF is $18 billion and not $1 billion that HR 240 provides.

Mr. McDermot announces that he is introducing HR 751, which is the Democratic version of TANF reauthorization.

The next speaker was Congresswomen Lynn Woolsey of California.

She testified that she was 29 years old when her husband left her with three children ages 1,3, and 5. Although she was working, her employment did not yield enough income to provide for her family, thus, she had to rely on welfare. Her testimony rebutted many of the conservative myths about welfare in America.

She urged the committee to allow women to choose education and training as a means of becoming elf-sufficient rather than limiting their choices which are decided by the welfare bureaucrats as the current law and HR 240 would do.

She urged the committee to enact legislation that empowers people rather than punishing them for being poor.

The next person appearing was **Wade Horn**, who is the Assistant Secretary for Children and Families of HHS. He was representing the Bush Administration.

His long testimony has nothing but good things to say about the TANF program and sang the praises for the Bush TANF proposal which punishes the poor as eloquently stated by Congresswoman Woolsey.

Kevin McGurie. Maryland Department of Human Resources appeared and sang the praises of the TANF program because over 76% of the TANF funds are now available for bureaucrats and only a meager 24% of the TANF grant goes to payments to families. No wonder they have 76% of the TANF funds for the bureaucrats to play with. A family of three only receive less than $500 a month in Maryland.

Mr. McGuire made supported "state-flex" demonstration program that would let States do whatever they want.

Next up was the **Robert Hector** of the Heritage Foundation. Robert is one of the ardent supporters of the **Terrorist Act on Needy Families** also known as the TANF legislation. For years Heritage Foundation has been implying that government spends over $200 billion a year on welfare recipients. Of course this is a bold face LIE insofar as the AFDC and TANF program are concerned. We have no idea how much money is given to bureaucrats and businesses under the disguise of helping welfare recipients.

Mr. Rector's testimony primarily supported the proposal of giving State bureaucrats $300 million to support "marriage" in the low-income community. The Heritage Foundation has been a longtime proponent of giving government money to government bureaucrats and not the to the people. Not one penny of the $300 million is required to be spent on poor family trying to get married. How about giving the newly weds some seed money to start their family? Many marriages fall apart due to the economic status of the family. Living with your in-laws can take a toll.

What Mr. Rector and his comrades need to do is to support having 75% of all of the money for Marriage Initiatives be provided directly to the families who are getting married and not to their beloved government and private enterprise bureaucrats.

Following Robert Rector was his comrade **Ron Haskins** of the Brookings Institute. Ron was the staffer for the subcommittee when TANF was enacted.

Ron sang the praises of TANF alleging that is has reduced poverty rates in America. It appears that terminating benefits after two years and leaving families only Food Stamps and Medical assistance reduces poverty. In real life it is a sentence to "poverty".

He also supported increasing the federal mandate on work participation.

Next was another supporter to TANF, **Jason Turner** of the **Center for Self-Sufficiency in Milwaukee, Wisconsin**. Jason use to be in charge of the Office of Family Assistance under former President Bush and Director of the New York welfare system. Jason Turner is compassionate person and he wants to make the bill better by adding Full Check Sanctions. This means that if a woman with three kids, 1,3, and 5 does not show up for her workfare duty because she did not have child care, she will be subject to Full Check sanctions.

He also suggested that Food Stamp federal eligibility requirements should be consistent with the TANF federal eligibility requirement. This implies that TANF has federal eligibility requirements - it does not for all practical purposes. States can establish and do whatever they want to do.

He also alleges that TANF recipients "..who are probably able to work are entering the SSI rolls from TANF..." The key work is "probably". The only way someone can qualify for SSI is by showing that they have a disability and are unable to work for more than 12 months anywhere in the United States of America.

His testimony also launches an attack on SSI recipients, mimicking George Bush's attack on SSA recipients.

Next to testify was **Jeffrey Johnson**, President of the National Partnership for Community Leadership. Jeff represents a **"fatherhood organization".** They support the TANF program because they are using TANF money to operate a program that serves fathers who are 25 or older. They have served 700 fathers by helping them assume emotional, nurturing, legal and financial responsibility for their children.

"To use a medical analogy, H.R. 240 proposes a "treatment" for America's most impoverished families that has an unacceptable risk benefit profile. The side effects of H.R. 240's increased and unrealistic work requirements are predictably the exposure of more families and children to mandated full family sanctions and thus to food insecurity, ill health, and excess hospitalizations. Deborah Frank - a Child Doctor"

The next panel started with the testimony of David Hansell, Chief of Staff, Department of Social Services.

He also sang the praises of TANF stating that the caseload has decreased by 78 percent since 1995. His testimony did not have any mention of what happened to the 78 percent of families terminated from TANF. How many of the children terminated ended up in foster care? How many ended up homeless?

Mr. Hansell stated that the people left on TANF today have "..significant clinical barriers to self-sufficiency." He asked for increased flexibility as to how the State can spend the TANF money. In 2003, only 42% TANF money went to payments for families. That means that a whopping 58% is used for the TANF bureaucracy. Mr. Hansell wants to use more of the TANF money for payments to families for payments to bureaucrats.

Next, and finally, **Lisalyn Jacobs** appeared, representing **Legal Momentum**, formerly NOW Legal Defend Fund for Education.

While TANF proponent Ron Haskins was alleging that poverty has declined, Ms. Jacobs clarified that actually since 2000 to 2004, 4.3 million additional Americans fell into poverty. 56% of these are women.

CCWRO NOTE: This increase in the poverty rates is tied to the time limits going into effect after 2 years. TANF took effect in 1998. The 2 year limit kicked in 2000. Since 2000 4.3 million have entered poverty. If the purpose of the TANF legislation was to dump families into poverty - it has been a great success for those who enjoy seeing people suffer like the proponents of the evil TANF program.

Ms. Jacobs also opposed the "Marriage initiative" by stating that government should stay out of the family formation business. She also opposed increasing work hours for TANF and supported training and education for TANF recipients.

Next was **Kathleen Curran, Policy Advisor to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops**. Mr. Curran started by stating that "The Bishops are guided by consistent Catholic moral principles and traditional values; respect for human life and dignity' importance of family and value of work; an option for the poor and the call to participation..."

Ms. Curran encouraged the committee to expand the definition of "work" to include training and secondary education.

She also encouraged the committee to remove policies by states that deny TANF to 2-parent families.

Deborah Frank, M.D., Pediatrician, Boston Medical Center, said that HR 240 has policies that entails unintended but grave risks to the health of TANF children. We are not sure that it is unintended. It is the position of CCWRO that these outcomes were carefully thought out and the supporters of the TANF legislation and HR 240 know exactly what they are doing.

She stated that "food insecurity" has increased among poor children. She is concerned that the TANF sanctions exasperates the food insecurity among poor children of America.

She also testified that her colleagues are concerned about the potential impact of increased work requirements on caregives of chronically ill children of any age.

She stated that "To use a medical analogy, H.R. 240 proposes a "treatment" for America's most impoverished families that has an unacceptable risk benefit profile. The side effects of H.R. 240's increased and unrealistic work requirements are predictably the exposure of more families and children to mandated full family sanctions and thus to food insecurity, ill health, and excess hospitalizations. Deborah Frank - a Child Doctor"

The final person to testify was Peter Goldberg of the Alliance for Children and Families.

In his testimony he pointed out that one of the major barriers to self-sufficiency is the lack of having a car to apply and work at job location that do not have public transportation.

Mr. Goldberg also urged the committee to allow TANF recipients to allowed to use training and education as a means of preparing themselves for self-sufficiency.

CCWRO send an e-mail asking to appear before the committee, but no response was received from the Committee.

Of course, given the fact that the 2/11/05 hearing was announced on 2/1/05 and a person would have to first ask "may I testify", then get 200 copies of his or her testimony to the committee by 2/8/05, it is clear that Democracy does not exist in the United States of America for the common People - only the selected are allowed to participate in Democracy. Thus, what we have in the United States Congress is "limited democracy".

New Federal Poverty Guidelines

Persons	Monthly	Annual
1	$797.50	$9,570.00
2	$1,069.17	$12,830.00
3	$1,340.83	$16,090.00
4	$1,612.50	$19,350.00
5	$1,884.17	$22,610.00
6	$2,155.83	$25,870.00
7	$2,427.50	$29,130.00
8	$2,699.17	$32,390.00

SOURCE: 2/18/05 Federal Register, Vol. 70. No. 33, Page 8373