

**Children's Planning Council Meeting**  
**March 19, 2008**  
**9:30 a.m.**

Room 140, Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, California

Present: Chair Don Knabe  
Victoria Lewis Adams, representing Steve Cooley  
Jon Perry Amos  
Charles Avila  
Lauraine Barber  
Karen Bernstein, representing Bruce Chernof  
Phillip Browning  
Angela Carter, representing Trish Ploehn  
Deborah Davies  
Duane Dennis  
Amy Enomoto-Perez  
Jeff Farber  
Dorothy Fleisher  
Chris Floyd  
Felicia Lynn Ford  
Steven Golightly  
Cynthia Harding, representing Jonathan Fielding  
Jan Isenberg, representing Darline Robles  
Larry Lue  
Penny Markey, representing Margaret Donnellan Todd  
Jacquelyn McCroskey  
Elisa Nicholas  
Danny Ramos  
José Ramos  
Lisa Cleri Reale  
Bruce Saltzer  
Nina Sorkin  
Marvin J. Southard  
Beatriz Olvera Stotzer  
Robert Taylor  
Mary Helen Vasquez  
Phillip L. Williams

Chair Don Knabe brought the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

**Approval of the Minutes of January 23, 2007**

**Phillip L. Williams moved that the minutes of January 23, 2007, be approved as mailed, and Nina Sorkin seconded the motion.** Chief Robert Taylor asked for a correction on page

five, clarifying that a director of *educational* services (not a director of social services) was to be hired as part of education reform efforts in the juvenile halls and probation camps. **The motion was unanimously approved as amended.**

### **Chair's Report: Supervisor Don Knabe**

- Despite a gubernatorial veto on several previous bills, legislation has once again been introduced to change the state's safe surrender law, which allows individuals to safely surrender newborns at designated sites without fear of prosecution. AB 2262 seeks to extend the permissible timeframe for safe surrender from 72 hours from birth (which medical experts agree is a critical period) to seven days. Chair Knabe strongly opposes the extension of this window, and asked if the Children's Planning Council would consider taking an official position and sending a letter opposing the new legislation.
- Following a two-year design effort, the Board of Supervisors last month approved a one-year prevention initiative demonstration project spearheaded by the Department of Children and Family Services, which intends to show that engaging families in their communities is an effective way to keep them from entering, re-entering, or spending extended periods in the child welfare system. Knabe praised the Children's Planning Council's role in this initiative, and Jacquelyn McCroskey thanked Knabe for his own leadership in that effort.
- Child care is a vital part of the services offered to families involved in county systems of care, and Knabe believes that the county as a whole needs an integrated focus on the issue. On March 4, he asked the Chief Executive Office to report back in 60 days with recommendations for structuring a child care policy that cuts across county departments. He also wants to explore a more flexible legislative solution with regard to unspent child care dollars being sent back to the state, which over the past three years have totaled \$162 million.
- Planning for the prevention and early intervention component of the Mental Health Services Act is underway, involving a complicated stakeholder process for establishing funding priorities. Because adults and older adults with mental illnesses have competing needs, Knabe fears that services for children and young people could get lost in the shuffle. He encouraged Children's Planning Council members and partners to strongly advocate for children's needs, since the early identification of difficulties can prevent problems later in life. The Council is working with First 5 LA on a way for people from various communities to provide input into the stakeholder process; those wishing to be involved were asked to speak with Council staff.

### **Foundation Board Report: Phillip L. Williams**

The search for a permanent chief executive officer for the Children's Planning Council was delayed while the ad hoc Governance Workgroup developed its recommendations. Now that the Workgroup's process is complete—and given the importance of the chief executive officer's position within that Workgroup's proposed plan—the search will begin immediately.

As directed by the organization's sustainability plan, the search committee will include the chair of the board of The Children's Planning Council Foundation, Inc. (Phillip Williams), the two co-chairs of the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee (Jeff Farber and Colleen Mooney),

and a representative from the public sector (Sam Chan). Williams invited other interested Children's Planning Council members to participate on the committee as well. Executive search consultant Maxene Johnson, who assisted in the search when Yolie Flores Aguilar was named executive director in 2000, may also be involved.

Other management positions to be filled include the fundraising position that Flores Aguilar will vacate when she leaves at the end of April, plus the chief communications officer positioned recently held by Dan Hutson. (Those latter duties are now being filled by a consultant.) Williams encouraged anyone with questions about these processes to contact him or the Executive Committee co-chairs, Chris Floyd and Lisa Cleri Reale.

### **L.A. Healthy Kids: Howard A. Kahn**

Howard Kahn is the chief executive officer of the L.A. Care Health Plan and a co-convenor of the Children's Health Initiative of Greater Los Angeles. Three years ago, he appeared before the Children's Planning Council just as CHI's project, L.A. Healthy Kids, was beginning enrollment. Today he reported the program's success in three areas: bringing people together to cooperate, effective outreach, and improving the health status of children in Los Angeles County. Universal health care coverage for all children in California remains a goal.

Over 50 organizations participate in the Los Angeles County coalition—the state's largest—along with a substantial list of funders. The secret of the initiative's success, Kahn said, is that it has never taken a vote and in fact does not exist at all in a legal sense. Instead, it is a cooperative effort of all the organizations involved. Statewide, 26 Children's Health Initiatives in 30 counties serve about 80,000 members, more than 40 percent of whom reside in Los Angeles County.

Membership in L.A. Healthy Kids reached 45,000 a couple of years ago, much faster than expected, and enrollment had to be cut off at that point. Its membership largely consists of very poor, undocumented children who are not eligible for Medi-Cal or the state's Healthy Families program; nearly 85 percent have a family income below the Federal poverty line. Unlike the Medi-Cal population, however, more than 83 percent of Healthy Kids participants come from two-parent, intact families, and 80 percent have at least one parent working full-time.

A case study of L.A. Healthy Kids conducted by the Urban Institute found members to be generally healthy youngsters who, after enrollment, used emergency rooms less than the broader population. Parents say that the initiative's application process is easy, they are comfortable with outreach workers and providers, and co-pays are generally affordable. Access to medical and dental care has improved for members, unmet needs have decreased, and parents were both more confident they could get care for their children and more satisfied with the quality of care received. In 2005, the latest year for which data was available, the overall percentage of children from birth to age 18 without health insurance declined. "We're very much solving something," Kahn said. "Especially as employers have been dropping coverage, we're picking up these kids."

The Urban Institute also studied the CHI in San Mateo County—a generally wealthy area but one with pockets of poverty—and found that it provided much-needed dental care. In Santa Clara County, the clear message to the community that low-income children can get health coverage led to a sharp enrollment increase for both Medi-Cal and Healthy Families. Well-child visits and children having a usual source of medical care increased, unmet needs decreased, and

children missed fewer days of school—something that positively affects school funding and also helps youngsters keep up with the education that prepares them to be productive citizens.

An analysis of nine children's health initiatives statewide, including Los Angeles—all of which are locally funded—found that more than 1,000 hospitalizations of lower-income children were prevented each year in those counties, saving the state and Federal governments up to \$7.3 million annually. Expanding the Healthy Kids program to additional counties could have prevented 4,300 hospitalizations over the past seven years, saving an additional \$30 million annually. An expansion of the program was included in the governor's recent health care reform package; support is strong, but funding will be a challenge. In a tough budget time, can legislators support allocating state funds to undocumented residents? Kahn believes they should, saying, "We've already made that decision with regard to the schools."

A 7 percent cut for the Medi-Cal population in the L.A. Care Health Plan had already been made, and state funding for Healthy Kids is not currently sufficient to continue it. The Board of Supervisors has committed to supporting the Los Angeles program through September, with further funds from The California Endowment and the Blue Shield Foundation. Beyond that, advocates are looking for interim funding and are not sure what resources will be available.

For more information, Kahn encouraged attendees to visit the CHI of Greater Los Angeles site at <http://www.chigla.org>, L.A. Care Health Plan's site at <http://www.lacare.org>, First 5 LA's site at <http://www.first5la.org>, and the Urban Institute's site at <http://www.urban.org>.

"It would be a tragedy if this spigot were turned off," Elisa Nicholas said, asking about a ballot initiative to support Healthy Kids. An initiative that recently appeared before voters needed a two-thirds majority to pass, Kahn said, and failed by only a small margin. A proposal for another initiative this November has widespread support, but no money is available for soliciting the signatures required to get it on the ballot. (Neither public agencies nor private foundations can fund that kind of work.) A statewide coalition is looking at several different options, including a possible special fee, and state administrators are very supportive. L.A. Care alone has spent nearly \$50 million over the last four and a half years to support the initiative. "The program is too successful," Kahn said. "It's too well proven by outside evaluators that this makes sense."

Marv Southard reinforced what Kahn said about the importance of marketing the program to families, letting them know that there's always a solution to get health care for their children. "We need to change the mindset of our staff as well," Southard said. "The fact that there's never an excuse for not providing care—that changes the whole game. It's a powerful insight."

### **Executive Committee Report: Lisa Cleri Reale**

Children's Planning Council members were sent the full report of the ad hoc Governance Workgroup prior to this meeting, and the report's executive summary was distributed in member packets and to the audience. Following the presentation, members were invited to voice their questions about, suggestions for, and edits to the Workgroup's proposal. A special Council meeting has been scheduled for April 17 to finalize discussions and vote on the recommendations.

Cleri Reale thanked Workgroup members (listed in Appendix A of the full report) for volunteering their time, expressing appreciation for the immense amount of work involved and for their personal commitment to the Children's Planning Council as an organization. She also thanked acting chief executive officer Cheryl Mendoza, acknowledging the difficulties of leading an organization in an interim capacity, especially in the midst of such intense discussions. "Cheryl's handled the situation with grace and class," Cleri Reale said.

**Context** Governance Workgroup member Duane Dennis, an Executive Committee member and the Policy Roundtable for Child Care's representative to the Children's Planning Council, explained that as part of their process, Workgroup members conducted a series of interviews with stakeholders in the Council's work. (A summary of those interviews, including excerpts, appears in Appendix C of the full report.) "Not one person," Dennis stated, "said they were comfortable with the way things are. Changes are needed in CPC, and to that end, we come to you."

When former chief executive officer Yolie Flores Aguilar resigned last July, the Council determined that certain governance questions needed to be resolved before it searched for a new top manager. Workgroup members were asked to engage on behalf of the whole organization, in what Dennis admitted was an imperfect process. "Eleven or twelve of us met for only three months," he said, "but if thirty of us had met for three years, the process would still have been imperfect." Members had no preconceived ideas about the result, nor were any recommendations proposed by management or the facilitator, Cecilia Sandoval. All agreements were achieved through consensus. "We believed that through stakeholder input, we would come to where we need to be," Dennis said. "This is a conceptual framework for where the organization should be, which is what will help determine the type of chief executive officer we need."

**Key Messages** Workgroup member Susan Rabinovitz, associate director of the Adolescent Medicine Division at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, is not formally affiliated with the Children's Planning Council, but was involved in the founding of the SPA 4 Council. She began her review of the Governance Workgroup's report by outlining its key overarching messages:

- The Children's Planning Council is still evolving and requires better alignment among multiple stakeholders around its fundamental mission and purpose.
- The Children's Planning Council's leadership role is being challenged by deepening structural tensions, the competing interests of different constituencies, and concerns about the organization's capacity to deliver on its promises.
- To succeed, Children's Planning Council leadership must:
  - Get all stakeholders grounded in its core mission: "*To improve outcomes for children.*"
  - Focus on what the Children's Planning Council does best—data, systems transformation, public policy, and building relationships between public agencies and community groups
  - Act to get consensus on organizational priorities
  - Realign its structure to support its work

Recommendations with regard to central structures are about realignment and improving internal functioning. (In the full report, the numbered recommendations are grouped somewhat differently and appear in sequence.)

**Realignment** The primary power and authority to effect change for children and youth lies in the members of the Children's Planning Council, a public/private partnership that exists nowhere else in the county. Acting on behalf of children, members define the Council's work and set priorities so the organization is transparent and accountable to its stakeholders and constituencies.

Governance Workgroup members overwhelmingly heard that, with a membership of over 50, the Children's Planning Council is no longer an effective decision-making group and is too large to have meaningful policy discussions or effectively problem-solve. Reducing the number of members to 30 will strengthen the Council's ability to take action on behalf of children, youth, and families in Los Angeles County.

- ◆ **Recommendation 1: Streamline the composition of the CPC** to reduce its size and better reflect the evolution of various CPC partnerships and the way in which the county and other public systems now function.

"There were hard decisions to make about who would be at the table," Rabinovitz said. "The underlying principle was that if members sit at the table, they represent a constituency—accountable to a larger audience and reporting back to their stakeholders." Streamlining the Council's composition will allow it to continue concentrating on one of the things it does best, which is making policy decisions for Los Angeles County, as the heads of public and private systems, agencies, and community networks sit at the table with the chair pro tem of the Board of Supervisors. The Workgroup determined that 30 members was an optimum number, though the Council will make the final determination. "The goal to keep in mind," Rabinovitz said, "is to make sure we have high-level decision-makers and representative stakeholders—a nimble body that can navigate policy issues quickly."

Stakeholder conversations also indicated that Children's Planning Council meetings are no longer as engaging as they once were. They need to be more interactive and more focused on the public/private partnership's solving problems and influencing policy.

- ◆ **Recommendation 2: Significantly change the nature of CPC meetings** so they fully engage CPC members. Focus meeting agendas on policy discussions and decisions that support progress toward the five outcomes.

The Council's Executive Committee was originally created to handle time-sensitive issues between full Council meetings, but has evolved to take more of a leadership role. With a smaller, more streamlined composition, the Children's Planning Council itself can be more involved in making decisions.

- ◆ **Recommendation 13: Create a smaller Operations Committee in place of the Executive Committee**, with the new body serving as a resource for staff, with the authority to act between CPC meetings on issues delegated to it.

**Improving Internal Functioning** Recommendations in this category strengthen the cross-cutting functions of the Children's Planning Council, policy and data collection and analysis, and also address human-resource issues related to the workforce and volunteer relationships.

"CPC should continue to do what it's positioned to do—what no one else in the county can do," Rabinovitz said. "Its role is to balance countywide and local concerns."

- ◆ **Recommendation 3: Strengthen CPC's policy role.** Public policy is a cross-cutting function of CPC that is anchored in the Council itself; therefore, policy considerations should not be relegated to a standing committee. Advancing policy work should be the responsibility of staff and CPC as a whole.

Rather than burdening the organizational structure with standing committees that may become irrelevant over time, Governance Workgroup members felt that ad hoc groups reporting directly to the Children's Planning Council—as the countywide body—could more efficiently deal with emerging policy issues, then dissolve when issues are resolved or other structures are put in place. Rabinovitz cited the governance group itself as an example of this approach, along with the group that worked on ideas for restructuring the juvenile justice system.

- ◆ **Recommendation 4: Continue to streamline committee structures.** Keep the number of standing CPC committees small to encourage CPC members to work as a group. Especially with cross-cutting policy issues identified by the organization, use small ad hoc work groups that report directly to the CPC.

Data plays a unique role in the work of the Children's Planning Council. The Council's vision has always called for data-driven planning within Los Angeles County, and for data to be used to evaluate success in improving outcomes for children and families. The Data Partnership plays a key role in that, and should be reconvened and properly staffed.

- ◆ **Recommendation 7: Strengthen CPC's data function.** Reconvene the Data Partnership committee and strengthen staffing to provide data, information, training, and technical assistance to planning efforts across the county and in communities, to measure and track progress on the five outcome areas for child well-being.

As its workforce becomes more professionalized, adding a Children's Planning Council voice to the Foundation Board's Personnel Committee can provide additional insight and expertise in helping the chief executive officer monitor human-resource functions.

- ◆ **Recommendation 5: Modify the Personnel Committee and clarify its role.** Add at least one but no more than two CPC members to the Foundation Board personnel committee, and significantly expand the oversight role of the joint body.

Workgroup members heard concerns from staff and from the community about the increase in the number of permanent employees at Children's Planning Council headquarters. The clear

message was that the Council should employ permanent staff for ongoing central functions, but should retain short-term consultant help for time-limited or grant-specific projects or activities.

- ◆ **Recommendation 6: Streamline the workforce.** Limit the number of permanent staff and raise the level of their expertise so that key functions are well staffed but consultants and independent contractors are used to support short-term and special projects.

Volunteer contributions are and always have been vital to the work of the Children's Planning Council and the SPA/AIC Councils. The Workgroup recommends building the capacity of those volunteers through training and support mechanisms, and by clarifying their roles.

- ◆ **Recommendation 8: Strengthen volunteer relationships.** Enhance volunteer relationships through staff training, implementing a Volunteer Development Program, and developing role descriptions for key volunteer leadership positions.

Partnerships of all kinds are important, but some have ramifications needing further thought and standards to guide decisions.

- ◆ **Recommendation 9: Develop a clear policy on partnerships.** A detailed policy on partnerships—including a definition of their different types—should be developed by staff in consultation with the Foundation Board and representatives of the CPC and the Community Table, and brought to the CPC.

**Community Structures** “When looking at community structures,” Dennis said, “it’s important that we recognize how essential the SPA/AIC Councils are to the Children’s Planning Council. I do a lot of national work, and this connection of community to government is rare. There aren’t too many places where this is replicated.” As Governance Workgroup members spoke to stakeholders, however, they got a constant sense of ‘we-they’ conflicts on many different levels. “Expectations need to be clear,” Dennis said. “In community development initiatives, there’s a role for everyone—downtown staff, the SPA/AIC Councils, the Board of Supervisors, the Foundation Board, and Children’s Planning Council members. We need to be clear about roles and stakeholder expectations.”

One new structure being proposed is the Community Table, a collaborative to be created by the SPA/AIC Councils along with the Children’s Planning Council to better inform policy decisions and systems change. In the full report, the Workgroup outlines some preliminary ideas on Community Table composition and the need for interlocking membership with the Children’s Planning Council as the countywide body.

- ◆ **Recommendation 14: Create a broader “Community Table” in place of the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee.** Broaden the SCCC to become a community collaborative or “table” created by the SPA/AIC Councils, to function as a committee of the CPC with an agenda driven by the communities it represents.

The Workgroup also saw the need for the SPA/AIC Councils to be given more flexibility in determining their own function and composition, bringing together community collaboratives of groups specific to each region. Councils would have more operational freedom, but their work would still be tied to the Children's Planning Council's overall mission and the five outcome areas of child well-being (good health, safety and survival, economic well-being, social and emotional well-being, and achievement and workforce readiness). The participation of departmental representatives would be at the discretion of the individual councils and management, with the assumption that specific problem-solving would occur with county or public-agency managers at the Community Table.

- ◆ **Recommendation 10: Restate the function, leadership, and composition of the SPA/AIC Councils.** The SPA/AIC Council serves as the community collaborative in the SPA or American Indian community and should represent that population and institutional infrastructure. It should have a small steering or operations committee that serves as the principal driver of its work.

Some years ago, the Children's Planning Council agreed that each SPA/AIC Council should do community organizing, and much debate has arisen from this decision. “We grappled with this as a group,” Dennis said, “knowing how much it takes to do grassroots organizing. We have to look at the capacity of the SPA/AIC Councils and their ability to do it. We really need to think about that.” The Workgroup affirmed that community building is essential to achieving the Children's Planning Council's mission, but that the SPA/AIC Councils should not be required to do community organizing. That function can be done in partnership with other local organizations, or contracted out, keeping in mind that ‘CPC should only do what others can't or won't do.’ The focus on grassroots organizing has contributed to wonderful work in some councils and to weakened structures in others; Workgroup members heard very strong opinions for and against it among stakeholders. It remains an issue of capacity and funding.

“We agreed that councils should be involved in community building,” Dennis continued. “Organizing is one tool for that, but it's not a necessity in all cases. It's a sophisticated process. In certain councils, the organizing is very advanced, and if you're there, you're there, but we shouldn't say any more that you *must* be there. Some councils may use asset analysis—who are the partners, what are the needs, where are the people in the community who can do the organizing?”

- ◆ **Recommendation 11: Clarify the SPA/AIC Councils' community organizing role.** CPC should affirm that community building work and strengthening the capacity of communities to act on their own behalf are necessary to achieve the five outcomes of child well-being. However, grassroots community organizing is but one strategy that the SPA/AIC Councils can use to engage community members, and it is one that should be undertaken only under specific conditions. Councils should focus on partnering with other organizations and groups that have the capacity and experience to build parent, youth, and resident networks; on connecting existing efforts; and on forging strategic alliances to strengthen the role of community members and create community change.

Further recommendations include revising the SPA/AIC Council funding formula to guarantee a base amount for every council, make 'need-based' allocations calculated through a fairness formula yet to be developed, and have additional distributions available by application to fund creative and innovative approaches. The recommendation to reframe council staffing options involves phasing in SPA Field Managers in place of council coordinators, with options for a second staff position at the discretion of the individual council and management.

- ◆ **Recommendation 12: Revise the SPA/AIC Councils' funding formula and reframe their staffing function.** Rather than distributing funds equally to all SPA/AIC Councils, CPC should apply a "fairness formula" that would guarantee a base amount for core activities, reward good work, and reframe the two staff positions for each council.

**Implementation Messages** Despite concerns that Workgroup members heard about how the Council functions, everyone they contacted agreed that the Children's Planning Council is still essential to accomplishing goals for children and families in the community. "We must do everything we can to support the functioning and effectiveness of CPC," Rabinovitz told members. "It's the only place that brings all kinds of stakeholders together to focus on improving results, which must be its heart. If you decide to adopt these recommendations, it will take something from each of you. CPC will look different, the SPA/AIC Councils may undergo a transformation. But we can't just assign a committee to effect all this change."

The Workgroup strongly urges the Council to retain an experienced consultant at the executive level to oversee and shepherd through the restructuring transition, as a short-term, time-limited function. Communicating clearly across the county about these changes is also critical, as is trust-building within the Council and among CPC stakeholders. "We believe this work is important and feasible," Rabinovitz concluded. "We were honored and privileged to serve on the Workgroup. We are disbanded now, but we remain as resources to everyone here. Thank you."

**Discussion** Lisa Cleri Reale thanked Dennis and Rabinovitz for their presentation, and further acknowledged consultant Cecilia Sandoval for facilitating the Workgroup and putting together the report. She then opened the floor to Children's Planning Council members for discussion,

asking that the written feedback forms be completed and handed in to staff after the close of the meeting. (The final line on the form is for additional comments, suggestions, or ideas, which may include further recommendations from Council members and the audience.)

The recommendations will be discussed in depth during the remainder of today's meeting and over the next month. By April 17, the meeting agenda will be narrowed down to any areas of real contention, which will be discussed at that time. Elisa Nicholas requested that a summary of comments be e-mailed to members as far in advance of April 17 as possible.

Comments were taken in recommendation order; if a recommendation number does not appear below, it did not generate any discussion. Questions and concerns voiced by Children's Planning Council members are shown with responses from Workgroup members indented below them.

➤ **Recommendation 1: Streamline the composition of the CPC.**

Cleri Reale read the proposed composition from the full Governance Workgroup report:

The total number of voting CPC members should not exceed 30, and would include both ex-officio members (there by virtue of their office or position) and representatives nominated by the entities they represent:

- Chair pro tem of the Board of Supervisors as chair
- CPC Foundation Board chair
- Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court
- Chair and co-chair of the CPC "Community Table"
- Four Deputy Chief Executive Officers who head the Child and Family Well-Being, Health and Mental Health Services, Public Safety, and Community and Municipal Services county department clusters
- Two emeritus founding members (non-voting)
  
- Five representatives, one from each of the county's supervisorial districts
- Two youth (from a SPA/AIC youth network or non-traditional youth group determined by the Community Table, using criteria that ensures diversity)
- Two parents (from a SPA/AIC parent network determined by the Community Table, using criteria that ensures diversity)
- City of Los Angeles Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families
- Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families
- Policy Roundtable for Child Care
- Education Coordinating Council, which will rotate its selected representative every two years among the Los Angeles County Office of Education and the six school districts that are part of its membership
- Inter-Agency Council for Child Abuse and Neglect
- Association of Community Human Service Agencies
- Southern California Grantmakers
- First 5 LA
- Board of Directors of the United Way of Greater Los Angeles
- League of California Cities
- Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
- Faith-based collaborative focused on children and families

The full report also addresses a point made by Steven Golightly with regard to the participation of public-sector alternates. Although he would like to see only designated decision-makers at the table (not secondary or tertiary staff), the full report reinforces protocols once understood but since relaxed—that only a single *designated* alternate may participate in CPC meetings on the appointed member's behalf, and that appointed members are responsible for educating and informing their alternates on the CPC agenda and their role in CPC meetings.

The driver behind this recommendation, Rabinovitz emphasized, was the need to reduce the size of the Children's Planning Council. Cuts were made evenly across stakeholder groups to keep the balance while providing significantly more 'reach' with fewer members.

- The current 12 department heads are replaced with four Deputy Chief Executive Officers, leaders of the county's program clusters, who represent 30 departments.
- Two education seats are replaced with one from the Education Coordinating Council, which regularly convenes all the school districts in the county and has as part of its membership the six largest districts plus the Los Angeles County Office of Education.
- The nine SPA/AIC Council representatives are replaced with two leaders from the Community Table, a broader committee with overlapping membership in the Children's Planning Council. The Community Table includes representatives from each SPA/AIC Council as well as from other community-based coalitions and umbrella groups dealing with underrepresented populations (HIV-affected young people, homeless youth, pregnant and parenting teens, and so on).

The SPA/AIC Councils will decide who sits on the Community Table, and the Table's representatives to the Children's Planning Council will be held accountable for translating the needs identified by communities to the Children's Planning Council for action and policy decisions, and translating the concerns of the Children's Planning Council back to the Community Table and local councils. In reality, Rabinovitz said, it's a more representative structure than now exists, constructed to encourage people to identify key policy issues and bring forward concerns in their communities.

"Where does this leave SPA 1?" asked Charles Avila, a co-convenor for that council. "We already feel disengaged from the county because we're so far north."

The SPA 1 Council will be part of determining who sits at the Community Table, Rabinovitz replied, and the Table will be staffed and supported so that representatives from all the SPAs and the American Indian Children's Council can meet regularly to identify issues that need support in local communities as well as those needing a countywide focus and resources. "You will decide who represents the Community Table at CPC," she told Avila. "Through this structure, we hope that you'll feel less disconnected. Because it's not only the Antelope Valley that feels that way—every SPA/AIC Council feels disconnected from the work of the countywide council. These recommendations were built around the desire to strengthen community input and involvement by building another whole level of community planning and engagement

across Los Angeles County, and making sure that the group has a strong voice and representation on the CPC.”

Historically, Sam Chan said, Children's Planning Council seats have fallen into three categories: ex officio, organizational, and those nominated by the Council itself (like the ethnic community, business, and foster parent/caregiver representatives). Adding the Community Table, the Education Coordinating Council, First 5 LA, and a faith-based collaborative would extend representation to other groups not on the Council now.

“It isn't so much about the number, whether it's 30 or 28 or 32,” Rabinovitz added, “as it is about strengthening the role of the CPC and building in structures so that communities are much better heard than they currently are.”

Mary Helen Vasquez stressed the link with parent and youth representatives. “They must be accountable for the anecdotal data they collect,” she said, “and for participating in community meetings and hearings. A stronger connection with parent and youth representatives must be brought to the forefront.”

Nancy Haruye Au, another Workgroup member, said that the disconnection Avila referred to was a major theme in the stakeholder conversations the Workgroup held. “At the CPC table as it currently operates,” she said, “no concerns from the community are actually brought forth. The original intention of the CPC was to have a vehicle whereby decision-making that affected policy could emanate from community issues. The Community Table will allow for that. That is the table where the issues that SPA/AIC Councils are grappling with in their neighborhoods will have paramount priority for conversation and discussion. From there, Community Table representatives will bring those issues to the CPC so it can problem-solve, respond, and address those concerns.”

Some issues can get resolved at the Community Table with action from local cities and municipal government, Workgroup member Dorothy Fleisher added, while some will need a countywide response that may require action from the Board of Supervisors. The Community Table creates opportunities for input with a group that has the authority to decide things. “It's part of the streamlining,” Fleisher said. “How it works in practice, we still have to figure out, but we think more focused tables and groups will work better.”

As co-convenor of the SPA 8 Council, Lauraine Barber commented that the idea of the Community Table is “fantastic” as a two-way liaison between the county and communities, but she also believes that SPA/AIC Council conveners will lose some of the spirit of working together if they are left out of the Children's Planning Council table.

Danny Ramos, a convener of the SPA 3 Council, recalled one of the first publications released by the Children's Planning Council, which spoke of creating a fiscal entity to combine dollars and create a more efficient system for children. He reads the vision of community participation within that context. “The CPC saw a vision of community, *real* community,” he said, “sitting at this table, making decisions for their community. It didn't speak about organizations, or heads of nonprofits, but about parents and children being at the table, interacting and making decisions to better their community. The conveners of all the SPA/AIC Councils have the responsibility and obligation to be represented here. This is our

place.” With 29 cities and 31 school districts, SPA 3 already experiences fragmentation and disconnection, as opposed to the “circle of healing” that Ramos would prefer and the coalition table that he wants to see. “We cannot decide to sever our relationship because of disconnection. That’s not a good decision. We are responsible to one another,” he said. “With all the passion of the life and heart in our communities, with the voices of children throughout the county, I ask that you reconsider that decision.”

Elisa Nicholas questioned the singling out of the City of Los Angeles’ children’s commission and chamber of commerce, saying that Long Beach, for instance, also has a chamber and a youth commission. “If other seats are countywide, how can we justify having just the city of L.A.?” she asked.

The municipal role is an important one, said Workgroup member Sara Jiménez McSweyn, and retaining the League of California Cities seat was an attempt to hold onto that element. Historically, the Children’s Planning Council has not had as much interaction with the business community as it should, and the chamber of commerce link is important. As a regional group, the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce does not concentrate exclusively within the city limits proper, Chair Knabe noted, but the area chamber does try to deal with issues from all 88 cities in the county, although no formal mechanism exists at present for other local chambers to feed into it.

Workgroup member Bruce Saltzer spoke in general about composition, saying that the Education Coordinating Council, on which he also sits and which looks specifically at the education needs of foster and probation youth, was used as a model for the Workgroup’s thinking about a streamlined countywide council. “It’s a smaller body that focuses on solving problems. It moves things along, making outcomes happen,” Saltzer said. He strongly endorsed the concept of a smaller composition for the Children’s Planning Council, with members representing general constituencies that can help meet the needs of the community.

The need to have so many people at the table, Au said, is an issue that the Children’s Planning Council has long struggled with. “That’s what has made the table so large. Everyone wants to be at a forum with this level of participation,” she said. “But in our quest to be as inclusive as possible, we’ve made the body less a less workable, relevant entity, with not all issues resonating with everyone. We need to look at the Workgroup recommendations in total. They all support each other. We need a process for issues that have an impact on a broad number of folks, with specific entities being brought to ad hoc groups for more in-depth conversation.”

Marv Southard commended the efforts of the Governance Workgroup, saying that its members were a brave lot. In his experiences with Mental Health Services Act planning, he has found that “everyone wants a small table—that they’re on.” But keeping any group to a workable size is vital. “If a group gets too large,” he said, “people still feel they’re not heard. Finding the right size for the mission of the organization is very important.”

➤ **Recommendation 4: Continue to streamline committee structures.**

Chair Knabe asked for an adjustment to the wording of this recommendation to clarify that standing committees do not make independent decisions, but bring their suggestions to the

Children's Planning Council as a whole. He also requested that clarifying language be added to the second sentence of the recommendation: *Especially with cross-cutting policy issues identified by the organization, use small policy-specific ad hoc work groups that report directly to the CPC.* In answer to an inquiry by Deborah Davies, Knabe noted that the make-up of the ad hoc groups would depend on the issue being considered, with appropriate experts being included.

➤ **Recommendation 5: Modify the Personnel Committee and clarify its role.**

Responding to questions from Beatriz Olvera Stotzer, Sara Jiménez-McSweyn related the history of the Personnel Committee, a small body originally established by the Foundation Board. Because the Foundation Board is the legal employer of staff supporting the work of the Children's Planning Council, the Workgroup believes the committee should include representation from both entities. The full recommendation ensures a meaningful role for the Children's Planning Council in supporting the human-resource function through the chief executive officer whose primary responsibility it is.

If the Foundation Board is responsible for hiring and firing the chief executive officer, Olvera Stotzer sees the recommendation as muddling of the line of authority. "Is there a lack of clarity about the role of the Foundation Board in relation to CPC?" she asked. "The Foundation is very separate. There's very little discussed about the Foundation Board with regard to this body."

In July of last year, Jiménez-McSweyn noted, the Foundation Board created a staff position—the Foundation's chief executive officer—that had a direct impact on the operations of the Children's Planning Council. That kind of process, the Governance Workgroup felt, made it difficult to achieve any sense of clarity about how personnel decisions were being made. Workgroup members recommend reconfiguring the process so that the Children's Planning Council's chief executive officer makes decisions about staffing, rather than the Foundation Board creating a post independent of the chief executive officer and the Children's Planning Council. Reconfiguring the Personnel Committee is part of that proposal.

The Personnel Committee is simply a committee, Dorothy Fleisher said, albeit one that is more closely integrated with the Children's Planning Council under this proposal. As shown in the graphic on page 30 of the full report, it does not stand alone, but is an offshoot of the Foundation Board. It is charged with some vetting responsibility in recommending actions to the Foundation Board and to the chief executive officer, but it is not a decision-making body.

Sam Chan, former chair of the Personnel Committee during his tenure on the Foundation Board, characterized his role then as having a finger on the pulse of what was happening programmatically with the Children's Planning Council, and gauging the impact of personnel decisions. He welcomes broader representation on the committee, so members have a better sense of what's going on with the larger organization.

Nicholas asked about the page 30 graphic, which shows a "countywide public/private partnership" in the center left area rather than "CPC."

Consultant Cecilia Sandoval explained that the term "CPC" is sometimes used to refer to the central body and sometimes to the whole system of ten councils (the Children's Planning Council and the nine SPA/AIC Councils). References to the "countywide body" are an attempt to differentiate those two terms, and Cleri Reale suggested further clarification in the report on that point.

➤ **Recommendation 6: Streamline the workforce.**

Currently, headquarters and field staff (those directly supporting the SPA/AIC Councils) total about 46 employees. Responding to questions about who makes decisions about staff structures and why they are addressed in these recommendations, Susan Rabinovitz explained that Governance Workgroup members had heard much concern about the expanding workforce at CPC, primarily at the downtown headquarters facility. As staff gets bigger, more resources are needed. "Yes, it's an operational issue," she acknowledged, "but it's also a policy issue. In order to accomplish the work of improving outcomes for children, youth, and families, we must think deliberately about the staff needed to perform certain tasks, and we introduced the notion of short-term, grant-funded consultants to accomplish specific activities and make better use of available resources. But we're not suggesting that the entire Children's Planning Council should make HR decisions. Ultimately, the chief executive officer is responsible for staff." Chair Knabe agreed that 46 is a large staff, and although the recommendation is not suggesting that employees be laid off, many projects are short-term in nature and plenty of opportunities exist to use consultants.

Knabe advised that the recommendation make clear that the Council gives direction to the chief executive officer with regard to staff, but does not make those decisions per se. Colleen Mooney asked that language be added to clarify that the recommendation applies primarily to central-office staff.

➤ **Recommendation 7: Strengthen CPC's data function.**

"I absolutely believe that data is the most important function of this body," Knabe said, "even above policy. The only way to validate the issues before us is through data collection and looking at the numbers." Robert Taylor stated that this should be the lead-off recommendation, suggesting that the language be added in a positive statement: *Data-driven planning will be a CPC goal, guiding all objectives and program efforts.*

The Workgroup was very much aware, Rabinovitz commented, that if data is not available for planning and to determine if the system of councils is really making a difference, then the Children's Planning Council is not fulfilling its mission.

➤ **Recommendation 12: Revise the SPA/AIC Councils' funding formula and reframe their staffing function.**

In arenas such as child care, Nina Sorkin said, certain ZIP Codes are identified as areas of greater need. Will the fairness formula to be developed utilize that kind of data, along with data on specific issues like teen pregnancy?

Workgroup member Cynthia Harding explained the idea behind the fairness formula, which is an attempt to respond to size, need, and other disparities among the SPAs and the countywide American Indian Children's Council. Each council would be allocated a base amount. In addition, the fairness formula—yet to be developed and approved by the Children's Planning Council—would identify an additional amount based on indicators that might include geographic size, say, or greater numbers of children and families.

Sorkin went on to ask if SPA/AIC Councils that are farther along on the organizational continuum would be given priority, or if addressing needs in a particular region would take precedence.

If these recommendations are adopted, Rabinovitz said, then the Children's Planning Council will need to consider implementation issues like that, but the Governance Workgroup did not address that level of detail. "What you're talking about, though," she told Sorkin, "is exactly the intent of this recommendation—a base level for every council, plus additional monies based on their size or readiness." Further criteria for funding, she emphasized, will be the unique factors in an individual SPA that may require additional funding. "There's a need-based formula for all," Rabinovitz said, "and there's innovation as part of that formula, with resources that councils can apply for. All the details, all the formulas, all the decisions are to be developed by the Children's Planning Council. The major point to be made is that all SPAs are not the same, and some level of funding should be based on need."

➤ **Recommendation 13: Create a smaller Operations Committee in place of the Executive Committee.**

Altering the composition of the committee is fine, Knabe commented, but he disagrees with changing the name. An Operations Committee existed in the past, Stotzer reminded members parenthetically, and Council members were upset because it was making decisions for them.

➤ **Recommendation 14: Create a broader "Community Table" in place of the Strengthening Community Capacity Committee.**

In response to an inquiry from Colleen Mooney, Nancy Haruye Au explained that the Community Table would be a committee of the Children's Planning Council whose member organizations would be determined by the SPA/AIC Councils in tandem with CPC. The proposal recommends that members include different kinds of departmental representatives and other experts who could help focus priorities toward achieving the five outcomes. Knabe agreed that the broader nature of the Community Table structure needed to be clarified in the report language.

Olvera Stotzer asked if the community voice that was being strengthened through the Community Table was not, in fact, a particularly narrow one. "The SPA/AIC Council structure doesn't incorporate the broader voice of the community," she said, "especially ethnic communities and individuals who can't do this work during the daytime. Is that addressed in the recommendation?"

Rabinovitz responded that the Workgroup had heard loud and clear that the SPA/AIC Councils are not representative of the broader community, and that the councils themselves know that. The Community Table is intended to provide a place at the table for groups representing underrepresented populations, parents, and youth, broadening participation beyond individual membership. "We didn't want to be prescriptive," Rabinovitz said. "The SPA/AIC Councils can configure a broad table that will give a voice to members of the community who do not now have that voice." Each council will sit with all the others to determine the structure of the Community Table, along with representatives of the countywide council and other partners.

Felicia Lynn Ford observed that many of the recommendations are "county-heavy and partner-heavy, not about plain, simple, average people like me," as she put it. "The community doesn't have a say in its own dealings, and I want to see that ring through all the recommendations."

Jacquelyn McCroskey sees community work as the heart of the Children's Planning Council's work, and is happy to support that vision in whatever way she can. "Just because I'm a founding member doesn't mean I have to serve on the Council forever," she said. "I match Danny's passion about this, and I'm glad to give up my seat if that would help."

"We've been talking about the specific fourteen recommendations," McCroskey continued, "but it's the CPC vision that's really at issue here. The overall environment is more fragmented than it was in 1991. We're all passionate individuals, but our passion is too often about our piece of it, and not about the whole. The question the governance group addressed is not about what we've been discussing—it's whether or not the CPC continues to exist. Our vision is more important than ever, and it has to be expressed differently."

Knabe stated that there is no need for a rush to judgment on the Workgroup's proposals. "We need to massage these issues," he said. "If we vote on them in April, great. If we need more time, we'll take more time." He encouraged everyone to share the full report with other stakeholders and their constituencies, complete the response forms, and get all concerns and suggestions in writing to be part of what will be considered. The Workgroup's report was received and action on it carried over to the special meeting scheduled for April 17.

To submit comments over the next couple of weeks, attendees were asked to e-mail Alex Marcelino, Children's Planning Council executive assistant, at [AMarcelino@laccpc.org](mailto:AMarcelino@laccpc.org). The Executive Committee will schedule a special meeting within the next month to review all the forms and other input that is received, to formulate the areas of concern that will be brought to the April meeting, to which all are invited.

### **Public Comment**

- Guillermo Hernandez, a co-convenor of the SPA 7 Council, praised the work of the SPA/AIC Councils and the Children's Planning Council as essential to improving communities and supporting children. "It took me sixteen years to come down and be part of these meetings," he said. "Not because I wasn't invited, but because I wasn't ready to be sitting in this room. It takes education to be part of what's going on and to understand some of the politics. But we can do it. We can work together for kids and families. Aside from our troubles, we have

solutions to most of the problems we face. I'm asking you to be patient, to share part of our history, to help make different policies, and to make things better for the whole nation."

- Patty López, a SPA 2 parent, expressed concerns about Recommendation 6, streamlining the workforce, which she fears may transfer staff who are known in the community to other positions. "If you move people around, it's hard," she said. "It took me a year to get close with the person that's working with us now. How can new people know the needs of the community?" She also spoke to Recommendation 11, which clarifies the SPA/AIC Councils' community organizing role. "I'm glad to see how many people are concerned about communities," she said, "because we don't have the social services we need there. In San Fernando, for example, we need education. Our area is really bad. I support community work one hundred percent, and I'd like to see more resources and support for SPA 2."
- Jennifer Villalobos said that she has been involved with the American Indian Children's Council since 1997, and although she realizes that change is necessary, her biggest concern is that many of the governance recommendations affect the SPA/AIC Councils, yet the councils did not have an equal voice or representation on the Governance Workgroup.

Sara Jiménez-McSweyn explained that even though Workgroup members may not have been identified as directly representing the councils, several have an extensive history of involvement with them. Susan Rabinovitz helped to establish the SPA 4 Council, Jiménez-McSweyn herself was a long-time co-convenor in SPA 4, and Nancy Haruye Au was active in the SPA 8 Council.

Villalobos questioned the language in Recommendation 11 about grassroots organizing being undertaken only under specific conditions. "If we're focusing on collecting data, how can we do that without getting out into the community?" she asked. "That's the only way to build relationships to get important data."

Nowhere in the recommendations, Rabinovitz said, was there ever an intent to diminish the importance of community organizing. What the Workgroup grappled with was the resource question. "If there are one or two CPC staff members in an entire SPA," she said, "is it the best use of that staff member to organize community residents, which is by definition intensive, focused, twenty-four/seven work? If other organizations exist in that community whose mission is community organizing, we're suggesting that the CPC support those organizations to get the desired results."

Villalobos echoed López's comment about the difficulties of constant staff turnover and bringing in consultants. "Doing that in the grassroots community is not easy," she said. "People who don't know what it's like out there can come in with an attitude. Trust needs to be built, and not doing that goes directly against what the CPC is trying to do."

The recommendations about staffing for the SPA/AIC Councils, Jiménez-McSweyn said, incorporate flexibility about the second funded position, allowing councils to decide how to use those monies. "Change is the nature of life," she agreed, "but it also needs to be done in a respectful manner, trying to embrace that which we really do want preserved."

- Chrysta Wilson, a Children's Planning Council staff member and manager for the past four years in community planning and engagement (who stated that she is leaving the organization this month), emphasized Chair Knabe's point about the Council not needing to feel rushed to adopt these recommendations. "We have fifteen minutes for public comment here, and five of that has been taken up with rebuttals. There are lots of points that people haven't been able to make," she said. "I agree that CPC has to go through a process to continue to do what it does best. Data shows that resident organizing wasn't the best approach, and it didn't always lead to the results we wanted. As CPC determines new strategies, it needs to be very clear as to what organizing looks like, what it takes, what resources are out there, and what the results should be. We didn't do the due-diligence required for community organizing, and we run the risk of not knowing the outcomes we're going for. It requires a lot of work."
- Sue Sisk announced that her organization, the Glendora Dental Surgery Center, serves children and special-needs populations. She will make information about those services available to Cheryl Mendoza.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Children's Planning Council is scheduled for:

**\*\* Thursday, April 17, 2008 \*\***

**\*\* 2:30 p.m. \*\***

Room 140, Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles

**\*\* Note special day and time. \*\***

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 noon.