

South Carolina  
Citizen Review Panel

# 2015 Annual Report



**Submitted By:**

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Diana Cannon and Carolyn Dorrell, Midlands CRP Co-Chairs  
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*Engaging citizens to improve outcomes for SC's children  
and families affected by child abuse and neglect*

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## TERMS USED IN THIS REPORT

CAN: Child Abuse and Neglect

CAPSS: Child and Adult Protective Services System

CAPTA: Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act

CBPS: Community Based Prevention Services

CCFS: The Center for Child and Family Studies

CFSR: Child and Family Services Review

COSW: The College of Social Work

CPA: Child Placing Agency

CPS: Child Protective Services

CRP: Citizen Review Panel

DSS: The South Carolina Department of Social Services

ETV: Education for Foster Youth

GAL: Guardian ad Litem

GOALL: Go Out and Learn Life

IL: Independent Living Program

JRS: Job Retention Services

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

OHAN: Out of Home Abuse and Neglect

PIP: Program Improvement Plan

SCCAMRS: South Carolina Children's Advocacy Medical Response System

SCCRP: South Carolina Citizen Review Panel

Dear Reader:

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), requires Citizen Review Panels (CRP) to examine the policies, procedures, and practices of the child protective services system to determine the extent to which the agency is discharging its child protection obligations. In South Carolina, we are fortunate to have a diverse group of passionate child advocates serving in this role.

Citizen Review Panel members offer their experiences as former foster youth, guardians' ad litem, foster care review board members, kinship caregivers, clinicians, etc. to provide recommendations that impact not only their work, but more importantly, children and families who benefit from their advocacy. I, as the coordinator, have the distinct privilege of working with this group of phenomenal volunteers whose mission is to improve outcomes for children involved with the child welfare system.

In 2015, the panel was invited to expand their contributions to improving outcomes for children in SC by working collaboratively with the new DSS administration and other child focused, results driven groups. The members are serving in a wide variety of roles outside the regular scope of their panel work. Their work involves improving how victims of abuse and neglect are identified and protected, especially children under five whose risk for abuse is highest; gaining financial and other supports for kinship caregivers, those grandparents and other kin who voluntarily take on the responsibility for raising grandchildren or other relatives; and improving outcomes for Independent Living services eligible children. These areas are germane to making a meaningful difference in children's lives.

The panel has made diligent efforts to better inform the public about child abuse and neglect by creating the role of Public Outreach Manager. Kayla Mallett, a Communication Enthusiast and Midlands CRP member, serves in this role and is working to promote the worthy work of the Panel. She has launched a Facebook page and is spearheading public awareness events. To learn more, visit the South Carolina Citizen Review Panel on Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/scitizenreviewpanel/?fref=ts>

Donna Xenakis, Low Country Chair, continues to provide Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Training as a vehicle for providing information about SC law and mandated reporting to individuals and groups and to educate the public about the work of the panel.

I would be remiss if I did not thank all the SCCRP volunteers for their contributions of time, talents and tireless efforts along with SC Department of Social Services' State Director V. Susan Alford and Deputy Director of Child Welfare Services, Taron Davis, for their collaboration and support of the Panel's work.

Please find enclosed the SCCRP 2015 activities and recommendations.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Wilson Worrell, MPA, SC Citizen Review Panel Coordinator

## LEGAL AUTHORITY

Pursuant to sections 106(c)(4)(A)(i) and (ii) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), each Citizen Review Panel is charged with evaluating the extent to which the State is fulfilling its child protection responsibilities in accordance with its CAPTA State plan by: (1) examining the policies, procedures and practices of State and local child protection agencies, and (2) reviewing specific cases, where appropriate. In addition, consistent with section 106(c)(4)(A)(iii) of CAPTA, a Panel may examine other criteria that it considers important to ensure the protection of children, including the extent to which the State and local CPS system is coordinated with the Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Programs of the Social Security Act. *This provision also authorizes the Panels to review the child fatalities and near fatalities in the State.*

In order to assess the impact of current procedures and practices upon children and families in the community and fulfill the above requirements, citizen review panels must provide for public outreach and comment (section 106(c)(4)(C) of CAPTA). Finally, each Panel must prepare an annual report that summarizes the activities of the Panel and makes recommendations to improve the CPS system at the State and local levels, and submit it to the State and the public (section 106(c)(6) of CAPTA).

Source/Date: ACYF-CB-PI-99-09 (6/2/99); updated 3/22/06

Legal and Related References: Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 5101 et seq.) - section 106(c)

## SOUTH CAROLINA CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL COMPOSITION

Per CAPTA statute, South Carolina has three Citizen Review Panels which meet in Charleston, Columbia and in the Greenwood/Greenville area.

The composition of these panels is listed below:

### LOW COUNTRY

1. **Donna Xenakis, Chair, Now Hear This**
2. Kim Clifton, HALOS
3. Judy Dossett, Guardian ad Litem, Dorchester County
4. Carole Grunsky, Victim's Advocate, Berkeley County Sheriff's Office
5. Tomeika Martin, Justice Works
6. Jodi Rosenberg, Hospital Social Worker, Roper Hospital
7. Kerrie Schnake, SC Program for Infant/Toddler Care

### MIDLANDS

1. **Diana Cannon, Richland County CASA Guardian ad Litem, Co-Chair**
2. **Carolyn Dorrell, USC Adjunct Instructor, Co-Chair**
3. Goldie L. Branch, Independent and Lexington County Guardian ad Litem
4. Diana Cohen, Lexington County Volunteer Guardian ad Litem, SC Certified Guardian ad Litem
5. Jackie Gadsden, There's Room, Inc.
6. Lillian Jones, Retired Citizen, Richland County Sheriff's Department Mediation Program Volunteer
7. Rosland Powell, Richland County CASA Guardian ad Litem
8. Kimberly Little Janha, Richland Legislative Delegation, former foster parent, kinship caregiver
9. Shandreka Jones, Former Kinship Foster Care (NJ) youth
10. Kayla Mallett, Girl Scouts of South Carolina Mountains to Midlands
11. Maria Martin, PASOS
12. Sidra Nelson, SC Consumer Affairs
13. Nina Spinelli, Juvenile Arbitration Program Coordinator , 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit
14. Dee Stogdill, Foster Care Review Board, CASA Guardian ad Litem
15. Kathleen Toburen, Lexington County Volunteer Guardian ad Litem
16. Brooke Wymer, Lecturer of Social Work, Director of Social Work Field Experiences  
Columbia College

### UPSTATE

1. **Timothy Duncan, Connie Maxwell Children's Home, Co-Chair**
2. **Brooke Thompson, Children's Advocacy Center of Spartanburg, Cherokee, & Union Counties, Co-Chair**
3. Rebecca Aiken, Pastor, Guardian ad Litem, Citizen Volunteer
4. Betsy Manning, SAFY
5. Carolyn O. Robinson, Retired Speech Pathologist
6. Rosella Quarles, Retired Vocational Rehabilitation Department
7. Crystal Noble, Department of Juvenile Justice
8. Brian Patterson, Connie Maxwell Children's Home
9. Derrick Quarles, First Class Consulting

## 2015 MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

The SCCRP holds bimonthly general and administrative meetings. The general meetings are attended by panel members and the administrative meetings are attended by the chairs, the SCDSS Deputy Director of Child Welfare and other members of the DSS senior management team. The purpose of the administrative meetings is to collaboratively exchange information and share ideas about improving child welfare. Working together enables the parties to inform the work of the other and to keep lines of communication clear and open. The groups' work is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding.

The SCCRP has subcommittees working on several areas of interest and works with the SC Department of Social Services by participating on agency work groups.

Highlights of the panels work in 2015:

- Panel members attended, or viewed by live broadcast the Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children Senate Oversight hearings.
- Seven Panel members and the group's facilitator attended the CRP National Conference in Oregon. Six of the panelist presented on the Panel's 2013-14 work on child fatalities. The presentation was entitled, "It is a Matter of Life and Death." Two panelists, Diana Cannon and Dr. Kim Janha lead "World Café" discussions. Ms.



Diana Cannon



Kim Janha

Cannon led a discussion on Child

### National CRP Conference presenters

Fatalities and Dr. Janha, presented on Differential Response.

- Diana Cannon, Midlands Co- Chair, participated on the SCDSS Independent Living Advisory Committee and participated in bimonthly meetings.

- Cheryl Worrell, SCCRP facilitator was a Senior Leader participant in the Project Best Learning Collaborative <http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/projectbest> and represented the SCCRP on the related SCDSS Trauma Inform Care Workgroups held bimonthly.

- Dr. Kim Janha was appointed to the Sisters of Charity Foundation Kinship Care Advisory Council, participated in quarterly meetings and testified before the Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children in support of Kinship caregivers' assistance.

- The SCCRP chairs participated in SCDSS Stakeholder 5 Year Plan meetings.

- The SCCRP facilitator represented the SCCRP at SCDSS Child Welfare Improvement Team bimonthly meetings.

- The Panel finalized a Memorandum of Understanding with the new SCDSS administration.
- The Panel facilitator participated in National Coordinator calls and continued service on the National Citizen Review Advisory Board.
- The Panel revised its' Bylaws.
- Donna Xenakis, Low Country Chair



**Donna Xenakis**

held two Child Abuse Awareness Prevention workshops in Rock Hill, SC.

- On April 29<sup>th</sup>, the SCCRP hosted, "The Demographics of Child Maltreatment in South Carolina: the Medical Point of View" by Dr. Olga Rosa for Child Abuse Awareness Month.



**Director Alford (pink suit) with Dr. Flynn (center, CCFS) and members of SCCRP**



**Dr. Olga Rosa, center left, with panelists**



**Kayla Mallett**

- The Midlands Citizen Review Panel formed a Social Media Committee headed by Kayla Mallett. Kayla developed a Social Media Plan and launched the Panel's Facebook page.
- The SCCRP facilitator was appointed to the Children's Justice Act Taskforce as an At-Large member.
- The SCCRP hosted its annual Fall Retreat on October 22, 2015. Interim Deputy Director for Child Welfare, Taron Davis brought greetings from SCDSS and provided an update on DSS work and CRP recommendations.



Dr. Cooper Kripa  
Cooper Lewter

Dr. Stephanie Kripa Cooper- Lewter with the Sisters of Charity Foundation was the keynote speaker. The title of her Keynote speech was, "Footprints on the Heart".

➤ Dr. Kim Janha and Diana Cohen were named as the Panel's Rising Stars for 2015. Both were elected as the new Co-Chairs for the Midlands Panel commencing 2016.



Carolyn Dorrell



Kim Janha, Cheryl Worrell and, Diana Cohen

- Carolyn S. Dorrell, Co-Chair of the Midlands CRP, was appointed to represent the SC CRP by Director V, Susan Alford to serve on the SCDSS Advisory Board.

- The SCCRP was featured in the Childrens Bureau CRP TIP SHEET # 2 , see below:

## WORKING SUCCESSFULLY WITH CHILD WELFARE AGENCIES

**STATE SPOTLIGHT**  
SOUTH CAROLINA

The Citizen Review Panels (CRP) in South Carolina have made a concerted effort over the past few years to formalize their relationship with South Carolina Department for Social Services (DSS). This has come about through the use of a formal Memorandum of Understanding, as well as monthly meetings between DSS leadership and CRP Chairs. This partnership has led to an increase in communication, especially in the area of cases involving child fatalities.

## PANEL CHAIR REPORTS

### LOW COUNTRY CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

#### CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS, DONNA XENAKIS

This year the Low Country Citizen Review Panel increased its membership by three panelists, Tomeika Martin, Kim Clifton and Kerrie Schnake. All new members work on behalf of children from infants to young adults in their respective positions. Ms. Clifton heads the only Kinship Caregiver program in the state dedicated to serving families who take responsibility for their kin when their parents are unable to do so. The Low Country Citizen Review Panel is pleased to have the participation and perspectives of all three.

The Lowcountry Citizen Review Panel remains concerned about child abuse & neglect and child fatalities in South Carolina. In order to be pro-active about this serious issue and to educate the public about child abuse & neglect and about the work of the South Carolina Citizen Review Panel, two free Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Trainings were provided in 2015. It is our belief and hope that with more adults educated about this issue and how to respond when child abuse or neglect is disclosed or suspected, children will be safer. We plan to continue this work in 2016.

Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Trainings were held, April 8, 2015 at Pilgrims Inn, and April 9, 2015 at Rock Hill Police Department in York County. The training is registered with SCDSS Child Care Training System for 2.0 Professional Development contact hours.

The comprehensive training addresses:

- the four types of child abuse
- why child abuse occurs
- who gets abused, and who the alleged perpetrators are
- the impact of child abuse on the child, their family; and on society
- what SC Law states about child abuse
- what SC law states about spanking children
- the clues that children give us when they are being abused
- the probable actions of the alleged perpetrator
- according to SC Law, who "Mandatory Reporters" are, and their responsibilities for reporting, what to do if you suspect a child is being abused
- how to handle a disclosure of child abuse, and what to document
- what a "Minimal Facts Interview" is, why it is so important, and how to conduct one
- what "Reason to Believe" is, when SC Law requires a report to be made, and
- which agency to contact to make a report.

Below is a summary of the training evaluations conducted:

#### **April 8, 2015 - Pilgrim's Inn, York County**

37 adults attended      87% rated the training excellent, 13% rated the training very good

Participants in this training include: adults from Pilgrim's Inn, Applied Technology Center, Richburg Childcare Center, Boys and Girls Club of York County, HC Johnson Elementary School, Safe Passage Shelter, and INVESTA.

**Comments Include:**

"This training was well presented and informative." ~**Anonymous**

"Very informative and well put together. Thank you!" ~**Anonymous**

"Great training, very thorough. ~ **Anonymous**

"This was an awesome training, and very helpful to me as a Childcare Director. There were great discussions that gave me more insight on what to look for and how to approach it."

~ **Christina Dixon, Pilgrim's Inn**

**April 9, 2015 - Rock Hill Police Department, York County**

31 adults attended      73% rated the training excellent, 22% rated the training very good

Participants in this training include: adults from Rock Hill Police Department, Bikers Against Child Abuse ( B.A.C.A.), Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office, Pilgrim's Inn, Boys and Girls Club of York County, City of Anderson Police Department, Fort Mill Boys and Girls Club, St. John's Preschool, Rock Hill High School, Northside Boys and Girls Club, York County Sheriff's Office, York County Guardian Ad Litem Office.

**Comments Include:**

"Great job!" ~ **Anonymous**

"Great training, thank you so much!" ~ **Anonymous**

"Thank you for a well presented training! ~ **Anonymous**

"Donna is very knowledgeable about child abuse, I learned a lot! ~ **Anonymous**

"Good and clear Information." ~ **Anonymous**

"Donna is an excellent trainer. The training is very informative and helpful. I will use this information in the future!" ~ **Nichole Hicks, Fort Mills Boys & Girls Club**

"Information was very helpful. I enjoyed presentation from B.A.C.A. ~ **Anonymous**

CHILD FATALITIES

Since 2012 the Panel has followed the Community Based Prevention Services Program (CBPS). A recent report of preliminary data for 2015 from Olga C. Rosa, MD FAAP, Director, SC Children's Advocacy Medical Response System (SCCAMRS) has the SC Citizen Review Panel concerned about reports of child deaths and injuries in SC in 2015. The data shared, especially the ages of the children, who sadly became a fatality due to maltreatment, is alarming and all too familiar.

Ninety six of the children seen had a history of prior participation, or were currently participating in the Community Based Prevention Services Program. Forty-two percent were actively receiving

services at time of the medical evaluation for suspected abuse/neglect. The majority were enrolled in Family Strengthening Services. This is an alarming fact, as these children and their families are participating in a program that is supposed to prevent child maltreatment. In addition, 71% had prior history or report for abuse/neglect, with neglect the most common history, 57% had prior DSS involvement, and 44% were medically indicated as child maltreatment, with physical abuse and/or neglect the most common maltreatment types found.

There were ten fatalities, eight of which were medically indicated for child maltreatment. Six of the eight child fatalities were between the ages of birth to one year old. While none of these child fatalities had prior or current participation in the Community Based Prevention Services Program, 50% (three children) of the child maltreatment fatalities had prior DSS involvement and/or prior report of child maltreatment. Physical abuse was the cause of the fatalities in all but one. One fatality was due to neglect.

The data is troublesome and concerning for the panel since it appears that reports that warranted an investigation were inappropriately referred to CBPS.

The Child Fatality Action Committee was established in 2013 out of concern for children who were inappropriately referred to CBPS. The committee's work focused on children between the ages of birth to 5 years old, with children birth to one year old in the most critical category. It has been and is the recommendation of the SCCRP that **when there is an allegation of abuse and neglect for children in this age group that the agency investigates these cases and not attempt to differentiate between levels of risk.** The recommendation was initially made because our review of the data indicated that the department was not able to adequately distinguish the risks and many children were injured and some died.

**In order to put the safety of South Carolina's children as our first priority, we strongly urge you to conduct a thorough DSS investigation when there are allegations of abuse and neglect; only refer low risk reports and exclude children in the following categories from referral to the Community Based Prevention Services Program:**

- **children under the age of five**
- **children with disabilities**
- **children in families with a history of criminal domestic violence**
- **children exposed to substance abuse in the home**
- **children whose families have abused them, their siblings or any other child**

**We further recommend that the SCDSS not only focus on intake but improve its ability and skill of its staff to conduct a thorough investigation to reduce the chance of children remaining in situations that are unsafe as soon as possible, but not later than June 30, 2017.**

## MIDLANDS CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

### INDEPENDENT LIVING- DIANA CANNON

Since 2012, Independent Living (IL) services offered to foster youth by SCDSS have continually been major foci for study by the Midlands Panel. There have been significant strides made towards ensuring that foster youth in SC are receiving services for which they are eligible, and that funds awarded to the state for IL are fully utilized. With the appointment of a new director at

SCDSS in 2015, came a new wave of enthusiasm and a renewal of a spirit of collaboration with the CRP, as well as, with other partners. This spirit has been exemplified by State Director Susan Alford's presence at DSS / CRP Administrative meetings and her responses to requests for information.

Past CRP recommendations with regards to IL were submitted in the 2012 Annual Report and included implementation of an IL Ombudsman to oversee our foster youth as they prepare to become independent, development of a streamlined application process for IL services, a placement of emphasis upon IL services available for younger foster teens, and an agency stance that proactively anticipates standard service needs of foster youth.

Although DSS initially rejected the recommendation to put in place an Ombudsman, due to hiring constraints, 2014 saw the addition of LaToya Reed as IL coordinator, and 2015 brought several "Youth Advocates" to the program. Ms. Reed is high- energy and is developing a staff of committed advocates for youth.

The DSS response to the 2014 SC Citizen Review Panel Annual Report assured that the application for IL services had been shortened, simplified, and can be submitted by providers, foster parents, and foster youth (ages 17 and up), but that is certainly unclear to the common observer. This writer accessed the DSS web site to find the requirements for submitting an IL services request. There were several forms and checklists available, all different. The Independent Living Guidelines Booklet, the Booklet – Youth Version, and the IL Request Form all had different requirements and to whom they should be submitted. It was a most frustrating and confusing search for a Master-Degreed adult, so one can only imagine how much more so attempting to navigate the process would be for a fifteen-year old.

As members of the SCCRP, we attended many IL meetings and learned that although there have been improvements to approved IL funds being sent to county offices, these funds may not necessarily be distributed to youth, or providers, for services for a wide variety of reasons related to follow-through. There is also frustration in the lack of awareness about IL services and funding availability by caseworkers – some of which can be attributed to high caseworker turnover. If a caseworker finally "gets it" about IL, they are suddenly gone from the job, only to be replaced by someone new, who may not be as familiar with the IL program. Too, there is an issue of caseworker overload, wherein caseworkers are actively trying to juggle so many tasks that offering IL services may fall way down on their priority list, and may not be viewed as the most important task needing to be done.

Listed below are the Midlands CRP 2015 Recommendations which include a reiteration of several former recommendations made in 2012:

- 1. The Midlands CRP recommends that SCDSS place a greater emphasis on the awareness of services available to the younger members of those eligible for IL services.**
- 2. The Midlands CRP recommends that SCDSS establish a standard of services that many, if not all, foster youth will require (graduation expenses, standardized testing costs, college application fees, etc.) and proactively ensure that anticipated expenditures are delivered beginning in graduation year 2017.**

3. **The Midlands CRP recommends that SCDSS adopt a single, consistent, and easily-understood application form and process for IL services, which may be submitted by foster youth and / or foster parents, by September 1, 2016.**
4. **The Midlands CRP recommends that the Independent Living (IL) Program have explicit authority to approve IL application requests, disseminate funding to IL service providers within the timeframes specified by the IL applicant and ensure service delivery.**
5. **The Midlands Citizen Review Panel recommends that the SC Department of Social Services develop Transition Specialists to ensure that all Independent Living (IL) eligible youth receive client-centered, individualized services by July 1, 2017.**

**Additionally, the Panel recommends:**

- a. **That the qualifications to serve as a Transition Specialist include case management skills and knowledge of available employment and educational resources.**
- b. **That the Transition Specialist has explicit authority and responsibility to ensure that covered youth have transition plans by their date of eligibility based on the Life Skills assessment.**
- c. **That the Transition Specialist only has responsibility for a specified case load of IL eligible youth.**
- d. **That the plan is client centered and developed in coordination with the youth and a multidisciplinary team knowledgeable about the youth's needs.**
- e. **That the Transition Specialist work in concert with the DSS case manager but have responsibility for developing, implementing and revising the transition plan to ensure continuous improvement as needed, but at least every 90 days,**
- f. **That the Transition Specialist manages the youth's IL application for services ensuring accuracy, eligibility and service delivery.**
- g. **That the youth receive training in all aspects of independent living skills that encompass what is needed for the youth to successfully transition into independence.**
- h. **That the transition plans include instruction on proper medication management skills, if appropriate.**

#### ADVISORY BOARD-CAROLYN DORRELL

In September, 2015, Carolyn S. Dorrell, Co-Chair of the Midlands CRP, was appointed to represent the SC CRP by Director Alford to serve on a thirty-member Advisory Board. The membership of the group is diverse, representing many different programs and constituencies from across the state. This Board will meet four times each year, with the first meeting held at Lexington County DSS Office on November 20, 2015. Director Alford and her staff presented a comprehensive and informative overview of all the Agency's programs, sharing a new vision of 'building on what we do well.'

#### SCCRP BUDGET -CAROLYN DORRELL:

During the Spring of 2015, the Midlands Co-Chairs worked to resolve some budget questions with SC Department of Social Services (SCDSS) represented by Jessica Hanak-Coulter and the USC Center for Child and Family Studies represented by Interim Director, Cynthia Flynn, PhD.

The presenting issue was the approval for travel to the 2015 National Citizens Review Panel's annual meeting in Portland, OR, where South Carolina Citizen Review Panel (SCCRP) had been invited to make a presentation. In the process of these discussions, we were able to bring

forward some longstanding questions about the roles of the three different entities: SCCRP, SC DSS and the SCCRP Coordinator. We were able to clarify decision-making roles and responsibilities, particularly with regard to how the SC CRP budget decisions were to be made. SC DSS explained where the amount of Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) funding for SC CRP falls within their Federal budget and USC CCFS shared the current budget document. Both shared where specific constraints existed, such as where funds could not be moved from line item to line item.

Agreement was reached that SC CRP members would be involved upfront in the budget planning for the year by developing and submitting a Scope of Work as the USC CCFS prepared their overall contract planning with SC DSS. In a follow up Administrative meeting in July, 2015, it was decided that the SC CRP Annual Report would serve as the SCDSS deliverable. SC DSS was designated to be the primary contact for SC CRP budget questions. SC CRP would receive quarterly reports and have input in any adjustments to line items.

The revised 2015-16 Memorandum of Understanding reflects these decisions.

#### KINSHIP CARE-DR. KIMBERLY JANHA

Kinship Care has been a concern of the SC CRP for several years. In 2009, the Panel recommended that SCDSS develop a Kinship Caregiver informational brochure in both English and Spanish for distribution to family/fictive kin when they are asked by DSS to serve as a kinship caregiver. At that time, DSS used the term Alternative Caregiver to describe the program. A subsidy for Kinship Caregivers was also discussed, but not formally recommended. The agency agreed only to provide information about the availability of resources for which families may or may not be qualified.

Kinship Caregivers, usually grandparents and/or other relatives are caring for children with no parents present in the home. A 2012 Annie E. Casey Foundation report, indicated that there are approximately 55,000 children (or 5% of the child population) who live with kin in South Carolina. While DSS is beginning to collect data to learn how many children are placed with kin; there are families who were or are not connected to DSS and may not be included in such data. Nonetheless, the 2012 data indicated that there are a significant number of cases where families step in to raise their kin's children who would otherwise be in the custody of SCDSS.

This past year, the Sisters of Charity Foundation, with support from the current DSS administration and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, formed a Kinship Care Advisory Council to raise awareness statewide on the challenges kinship families face by lifting their voices to key stakeholders, while offering practice and policy recommendations to strengthen resources, engagement and supports for these families. The Panel through its participation has developed relationships with new entities who are also concerned about kinship caregivers. We recruited Kim Clifton, the Executive Director of HALOS to join our Low Country panel. She will be providing her expertise in this area to the Citizen Review Panel.

The Kinship Care Advisory Council found that Kinship Caregivers were in need of resources to assist them in helping the children, entrusted to them, thrive. On Tuesday, November 17, 2015, Dr. Kim Janha, along with her Godmother and family friend (who are also Kinship Caregivers) testified on the need to support kinship families to The Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children. A copy of the remarks is included in the Appendix of this report.

The CRP was pleased to learn that kinship care was on the legislative agenda of newly appointed SCDSS Director, Susan Alford. Director Alford proposed to request funding in the SCDSS 2016-2017 budget to provide financial resources to Kinship Caregivers.

In 2016, the Panel plans to continue its collaboration with the Council and support of Kinship Care initiatives in SC. In addition to that work, the Panel recommends the following:

**The Midlands CRP recommends that the department create a volunteer program to engage the public in efforts to assist youth involved with the Child Welfare system. The Panel suggests the development of a mentoring program as one use for these volunteers.**

## UPSTATE CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

TIMOTHY DUNCAN AND J. BROOKE THOMPSON

In 2014, the Upstate Citizen Review Panel focused their efforts on administering an employee survey to caseworkers and supervisors in the SCDSS Upstate counties. The purpose of this survey was to investigate how the Panel could become involved in and encourage employee satisfaction and retention. When the project was initiated, the panel identified the following counties to survey: Newberry, Spartanburg, Greenwood, Edgefield, McCormick, Abbeville, and Anderson. The results received were helpful in narrowing down what issues the employees felt needed to be addressed as well as what employees felt was working well. In general, the results indicated common concerns regarding the following:

- The physical work environment not being safe due to lack of security measures in the building and parking lots. Also, results indicated that the buildings were short on space for the number of employees.
- Worker safety while on visits as well as while on call
- Many comments focused on insufficient support from supervisors and management

These initial results confirmed what the Panel suspected. At the July 16, 2015, Administrative meeting Director Alford attended the meeting and expressed interest in surveying employees as she was also interested in improving worker morale and retention. Deputy Child Welfare Director, Jessica Hanak –Coulter suggested that SCDSS and the Upstate Panel partner on the development and implementation of the survey and indicated that the Upstate Chairs would be included. It is our understanding that SCDSS has already administered their survey and has received results. Even though this is not what was discussed, the Panel is foremost interested in improving employee morale and staff retention and looks forward to being kept abreast of the agency's efforts in this regard. This is the ultimate goal, regardless of which survey is used. The SCDSS survey covered the topics on which the Panel was interested in receiving results. Results from the SCDSS administered survey indicated similar concerns as the Upstate Panel survey. At this time, the Upstate Panel will continue to follow the progress the agency is making in regards to employee morale, satisfaction, and worker retention. .

**The Upstate Panel recommends that SCDSS provide the SCCRP updates on agency worker moral and retention efforts at the regularly scheduled DSS/CRP Administrative bimonthly meetings beginning July, 2016.**

Members of the Upstate Panel participated in SCDSS policy manual revision meetings. The Panel was grateful for the opportunity to provide input and feedback. The Panel received an invitation to participate in the April 2016 public meetings to provide comment on the policy revision efforts. The Upstate appreciates the opportunity and is looking forward to participating and staying apprised of this effort.

Additionally, the Upstate Panel has identified mandated reporting as an area of concern that members would like to address in 2016. Due to experiences among some panel members, it appears that some mandated reporters fail to follow SC law when they become aware of situations requiring a report.

The Upstate Panel continued its focus on increasing membership and was pleased to add two new members, Derrick Quarles with First Class Consulting and Betsy Manning, a SAFY employee. Both are passionate about children and eager to use their talents and experience on the Panel.

## SCCRP 2015 FALL RETREAT

The SC Citizen Review Panel held its annual Fall Retreat on Thursday, October 27, 2015 at Reflections Clubhouse in Columbia. Dr. Stephanie Kripa Cooper-Lewter, Ph.D., M.S.W, Senior Research Director for the Sisters of Charity Foundation was the keynote speaker. She recounted her adoption story in emphasizing the need for children to have permanent connections.

Taron Davis, J.D., SCDSS Interim Deputy Director of Child Welfare Services brought greetings to the panel members and provided an update on the agency's priorities relating those to the Panel's past recommendations.

Listed below are those who were in attendance:

1. **Carolyn Dorrell, Midlands, Co-Chair**
2. **Diana Cannon, Midlands, Co-Chair**
3. Dee Stogdill
4. Diana Cohen
5. Lillian Jones
6. Kim Janha
7. Rosland Powell
8. Maria Martin
9. Kayla Mallet
10. Goldie Branch
11. Kathleen Toburen
12. **Donna Xenakis Low Country, Chair**
13. Kerrie Schnake
14. Carole Grunsky
15. Tomeika Martin
16. Kim Clifton
17. **Brooke Thompson-Upstate, Co-Chair**
18. **Tim Duncan-Upstate, Co-Chair**
19. Carolyn Robinson
20. Derrick Quarles
21. Taron Davis, Interim Deputy Director of Child Welfare Services- Special Guest\*
22. Cheryl Worrell, SCCRCP Program Coordinator\*
23. Cynthia Flynn, Interim Center for Child and Family (CCFS) Studies Director
24. Sheila Lilly, CCFS Program Assistant
25. Brenda Amedee, CCFS Senior Program Manager QA
26. Dr. Stephanie Kripa Cooper- Lewter, Keynote Speaker

## Appendix

### SC Citizen Review Panel Social Media Plan, Kayla Mallett

<p><b>Social Media Content Policy</b></p>	<p>Policy details:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The official social media account of the SC Citizen Review Panel (SCCRP) shall reflect the beliefs, values, mission, and opinion of the collective body of panel members and within the parameters set forth by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, §106(c)(4)(C) of CAPTA.</li> <li>2. The SC Citizen Review Panel Social Media activity will be limited to posts that are conducive to the following:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Raising awareness about SCCRPs mission, structure, and work</li> <li>b. Highlighting positive stories from volunteer panel members, supporters, community members etc.</li> <li>c. Promoting and encouraging positive stories from agencies including but not limited to:                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. DSS</li> <li>e. SC Legislature</li> <li>f. Sharing information about community events and opportunities to connect with the panels.</li> <li>g. Providing information regarding child welfare that has national significance, e.g., legislation, information shared by the Children's Bureau or National Citizen Review Panel Advisory Committee.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> <li>3. All posts should be reviewed and edited by at least two members of the Community Outreach Committee before receiving approval.</li> <li>4. The official page for SCCRPs will not engage in or respond to any comments or remarks made on the page that are inflammatory or accusatory toward DSS or any other partnering agencies. Such comments may be removed at the administrator's discretion.</li> </ol> <p>Reason: The social media component of the SCCRPs is intended to raise awareness of the panel and connect community members to the panel's work. Ultimately, having more individuals aware of the panel will help facilitate member recruitment and dissemination of information when necessary.</p> <p>Applicable social media tool: This policy will apply to all social media accounts belonging to the SCCRPs.</p>
<p><b>Security Strategy &amp; Procedures</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Administrative privileges of the page will be limited to select (and trained) members of the Community Outreach Committee.</li> <li>2. Training will include a review of policies and procedures, effectively using social media tools, and staying within the organization's mission.</li> <li>3. Individuals with editing/posting privileges are not permitted to delegate responsibilities to individuals without those privileges.</li> <li>4. All posts are required to be reviewed by two members prior to posting.</li> <li>5. Any inactive member or non-compliant member will lose access to editing if he/ she fail to operate within the social media policies of the panel.</li> <li>6. Members without access may suggest information and posts by sending an email to Cheryl Worrell, CRP Program Coordinator at WorrellC@mailbox.sc.edu.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Roles &amp; Responsibilities</b></p>	<p>Role: Social Media Manager</p> <p>Details of responsibilities: The Social Media Manager's responsibilities will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing &amp; implementing social media strategies</li> <li>2. Developing &amp; implementing marketing campaigns</li> <li>3. Performing regular monitoring &amp; measurement activities</li> <li>4. Managing social media team</li> <li>5. Networking</li> <li>6. Minimum # of 2 Posts per Week (Self or Delegated) on Facebook; Twitter, IG, and other Platforms may be added later.</li> <li>7. Person responsible:</li> <li>8. Role: Poster/ Contributor</li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Details of responsibilities: Posters/Contributors responsibilities will include:</li> <li>10. Completing training for Posters/Contributors</li> <li>11. Identifying interesting and relevant content for SCCRP's social media accounts</li> <li>12. Creating engaging posts which comply with the SCCRP's Social Media Policy</li> <li>13. Assisting in the monitoring of comments and other activities on SCCRP's social media accounts.</li> </ul>
<b>Key personnel training table</b>	Following SC CRP Fall Retreat roll out.
<b>3 Month Action Plan</b>	<p><u>October</u>  October 22, 2015 SCCRP Fall Retreat Roll Out  Collect Info sheet on panel members and corresponding photos of them  Training for Social Media Posters/Contributors  Draft email / Generic personal page post for panel members to share on their personal pages.  Announce 1,500 follower push. Break down goals by region/ panel member/ month, etc.</p> <p><u>November</u>  Launch Page with photo of as many panel members as possible: have panel members tag themselves, share photo, and comment on the photo.  Weekly highlight Panel members' stories and share their photos. Encourage highlighted panel member to have 10 friends share post.  Announce Upcoming training with Donna Xenakis, Low Country SCCRP Chair.  Provide "sneak peaks" to information given in training by posting interesting statistics and facts.  Running announcements of follower counts</p> <p><u>December</u>  Provide support to help build for December training event.  If there is a December social, post photos from the social.  (Perhaps) Highlight "angels" like foster parents, guardians' ad litem, DSS officials, etc. in the weeks leading into the new year.  Continue to push for 1,500 followers leading up to Donna's training.</p>



Kinship Care  
Testimony.m4a

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Tuesday, November 17, 2015

Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children

Speakers: Sandra Knightner, Gillia Robinson, and Barbara Thomas

**Child Welfare Issue: Kinship Care**

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you Senator Fair and committee members for such forums as this; which provides a platform for citizens to share their stories and express specific needs. I am thankful that there are persons who are dedicated to the children of South Carolina.

I am Kimberly Janha and am here in the capacity of a kinship caregiver. Along with my God-mother, Gillia Robinson and family friends Sandra Knightner (will email), and Barbara Thomas, we are pleased to talk about our experiences as persons who have obligated ourselves to raising our nieces/nephews and grandchildren. We have formed a village and aid each other in the raising of our children.

As you are aware, kinship caregivers usually (grandparents and other relatives) are caring for children with no parents present in the home. A 2012 Annie Casey Foundation report indicated that there are approximately 55, 000 children (or 5% of the child population) who live with kin in South Carolina. It is my opinion that this number is low. While DSS is beginning to collect data to learn how many children are placed with kin as an alternative; there are families that were or are not connected to the DSS and may not be included in such data. Nonetheless, the 2012 data shows that there are a significant number of cases where families step in to raise their kin's children that would otherwise be in the custody of DSS.

As you will see from the stories of my village, Kinship care families would definitely benefit from additional community support to help the children thrive. More can be done to help them access information about services and supports they can be eligible for. For example, families involved with DSS are not made foster parents; therefore do not receive a stipend as a foster parent or respite care. This leaves a tremendous stain on the caregivers. Additionally, neither are they informed, legally. For example, on how to maneuver through the challenge of

authorization for medical procedures. Such options of adoption and guardianship are not properly communicated or simply just not financially feasible.

Most importantly, these caregivers need the support to help these children thrive. The children's experiences are still traumatic and they have the same needs, issues, and challenges as those who would be placed in the custody of DSS. Yet the support that is received is significantly lower. In my case, they are not on anyone's radar. In other cases, the kin's are not informed of resources and/or are told that they do not qualify for services. I understand, through my participation on community boards, that there are two school districts that provide support groups for the caregivers and provide information on community resources; and there is HALOS (Helping and Lending Outreach Support) in Charleston that is an excellent model for kinship support. But how many others are there in South Carolina? How can we duplicate HALOS in the rural areas of SC? There is a strong need for support.

I am motivated in my volunteer roles as a member of the SC Citizen Review Panel, which is federally mandated to evaluate and assess the policies and practices of DSS, and as a member of the Sisters of Charity's Foundation Kinship Care Advisory board to advocate for increased resources for kinship care providers so that the children are able to flourish physically, mentally, and spiritually. I am committed to using my voice to raise awareness about the needs of Kinship families in South Carolina. But, even better than the voice representation is one of the voice of direct kinship persons who maintains the home, provides for the children, and still seems to help others. It is a forum like this that allows such power to push progress.

I offer my sincere appreciation for your time and present to you my village, Ms. Gillia Robinson and Ms. Barbara Thomas.

Humbly Submitted,

Kimberly A. Janha, Ph.D.

## NATIONAL NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION

### South Carolina Citizen Review Panel

The South Carolina Citizen Review Panel entered into a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the South Carolina Department of Social Services last month. The agreement was sought when a new agency head was appointed. The MOU spells out the various roles and commitments of the panel, the state agency and the University of South Carolina, the contracted entity providing support for the panels' work. The MOU includes specifics on how the panels will implement its CAPTA requirements.



The agreement details scheduled meetings, information sharing, volunteer and coordinator national conference attendance, the submission of CRP recommendations, panel members' access to confidential information, and this year, there is a section included regarding the panel providing input to DSS on its annual budgeting needs. The MOU is the foundation for the panels' collaborative work with the agency.

2015 MOU signing with V. Susan Alford (in pink far right)

### SC Update:

- We're growing! The SCCRP is recruiting new members. One of the ways we've sought to do this is by partnering with CRP volunteer, Donna Xenakis, who provides Child Abuse Awareness Training. Donna is a well-respected, excellent trainer and passionate child advocate. The panel and Donna collaborate with various entities to inform the public about child abuse and to discuss Citizen Review Panel volunteer opportunities.
- The panel was recently invited by the SC Department of Social Services State Director V. Susan Alford to provide input on South Carolina's new child fatality website <https://dss.sc.gov/ChildFatalityReports/>. The panel formed a Child Fatality Action Subcommittee in 2013.
- Dr. Kim Janha was named to the state's Kinship Care Advisory Committee led by the Sisters of Charity Foundation. This group is working to improve the support of kinship care providers in SC.