

SB

171

<TARGET><BILL>SB 171</BILL><SUBJECT>SB
171</SUBJECT><COMM>HJUD28</COMM></TARGET>

AMENDMENT

*retable as conceptual amendment #1
some language re adopted*

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

TO: HCS CSSB 171(JUD)

- 1 Page 1, line 8, following "neglect":
- 2 Insert ", in partnership with the department,"
- 3
- 4 Page 2, line 11:
- 5 Delete "may, to the extent feasible,"
- 6 Insert "shall"

HOUSE CS FOR CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 171(JUD)
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): SENATORS COGHILL, McGuire, Gardner, Ellis, French, Glessel, Bishop, Egan, Meyer, Stedman, Stevens, Micciche, Dyson

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to multidisciplinary child protection teams; and relating to
2 investigation of child abuse or neglect."

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 * Section 1. AS 47.14.300(a) is repealed and reenacted to read:

5 (a) The department, a state or municipal agency with expertise in child abuse
6 or neglect, or a tribe recognized by the United States Secretary of the Interior to exist
7 as an Indian tribe under 25 U.S.C. 479a (Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act
8 of 1994) with expertise in child abuse or neglect may facilitate the initial
9 establishment of a multidisciplinary child protection team. The purpose of a team is to
10 assist in the evaluation and investigation of reports of child abuse or neglect, as
11 defined in AS 47.17.290, made under AS 47.17 or initiated by the department or a law
12 enforcement agency and to provide consultation and coordination for agencies
13 involved in child-in-need-of-aid cases under AS 47.10. The multidisciplinary child
14 protection teams shall

1 (1) ensure that investigations involving child abuse or neglect are
2 coordinated and conducted by trained investigators;

3 (2) take and recommend steps to avoid duplicative interviews of
4 children;

5 (3) assist in the reduction of trauma to a child and family involved in
6 an investigation of child abuse or neglect; and

7 (4) review records, provide consultation, and make recommendations
8 to the department pertaining to a child-in-need of aid case under AS 47.10 referred to
9 the team by a team member.

10 * Sec. 2. AS 47.14.300(b) is repealed and reenacted to read:

11 (b) A team may, to the extent feasible, be made up of

12 (1) an employee of the child protection office in the department who
13 has expertise in child abuse and neglect;

14 (2) a peace officer, as defined in AS 11.81.900;

15 (3) one or more staff members of a local child advocacy center, if a
16 center is located in the relevant area;

17 (4) a medical care provider licensed under AS 08 who has received
18 training in child abuse assessment;

19 (5) a counselor, social worker, psychologist, or physician who
20 specializes in mental health care, is licensed under AS 08, and has knowledge of child
21 abuse dynamics;

22 (6) a prosecutor of child abuse cases or a designee of a prosecutor of
23 child abuse cases;

24 (7) a victim advocate with knowledge of child abuse dynamics;

25 (8) other persons with expertise in child abuse and neglect invited to
26 serve as needed by consensus of the team as follows:

27 (A) child development specialists;

28 (B) educators;

29 (C) victim counselors as defined in AS 18.66.250;

30 (D) experts in the assessment and treatment of substance abuse;

31 (E) an attorney who specializes in child protection in the

1 attorney general's office;

2 (F) a representative of an Indian tribe, as defined in 25 U.S.C.
3 1903(8) (Indian Child Welfare Act), as designated by the tribe;

4 (G) guardians ad litem; and

5 (H) a representative of the division in the department with
6 jurisdiction over juvenile justice.

7 * Sec. 3. AS 47.14.300(c) is repealed and reenacted to read:

8 (c) A team may meet, review records, and conduct business in the absence of
9 one or more members of the team. When a case is referred to the team, the department
10 shall make available to the team records pertaining to the case prepared by or in the
11 possession of the department, including appropriate confidential records under
12 AS 47.10.093(b). A member of the team may use or disclose records made available
13 by the department under this subsection only as necessary for the performance of the
14 member's duties. The team may make recommendations to the department on
15 appropriate planning for the case.

16 * Sec. 4. AS 47.14.300(e) is amended to read:

17 (e) A team shall meet at least monthly and may meet more often as
18 needed. Meetings of a team are closed to the public and are not subject to the
19 provisions of AS 44.62.310 - 44.62.319 (Open Meetings Act).

20 * Sec. 5. AS 47.17.010 is amended to read:

21 **Sec. 47.17.010. Purpose.** To [IN ORDER TO] protect children whose health
22 and well-being may be adversely affected through the infliction, by other than
23 accidental means, of harm through physical injury or neglect, mental injury, sexual
24 abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment, the legislature requires the reporting of
25 these cases by practitioners of the healing arts and others to the department. It is not
26 the intent of the legislature that persons required to report suspected child abuse or
27 neglect under this chapter investigate the suspected child abuse or neglect before they
28 make the required report to the department. Reports must be made when there is a
29 reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect in order to make state investigative
30 and social services available in a wider range of cases at an earlier point in time, to
31 make sure that investigations regarding child abuse and neglect are conducted by

1 trained investigators, and to avoid subjecting a child to duplicative [MULTIPLE]
2 interviews about the abuse or neglect. It is the intent of the legislature that, as a result
3 of these reports, protective services will be made available in an effort to

4 (1) prevent further harm to the child;

5 (2) safeguard and enhance the general well-being of children in this
6 state; and

7 (3) preserve family life unless that effort is likely to result in physical
8 or emotional damage to the child.

9 * Sec. 6. AS 47.17.033(c) is amended to read:

10 (c) An investigation by the department or another investigating agency of
11 child abuse or neglect reported under this chapter shall be conducted by a person
12 trained to conduct a child abuse and neglect investigation and without subjecting a
13 child to duplicative interviews [MORE THAN ONE INTERVIEW] about the abuse
14 or neglect except when new information is obtained that requires further information
15 from the child.

28-LS1416\P
Mischel
3/25/14

HOUSE CS FOR CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 171()
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): SENATORS COGHILL, McGuire, Gardner, Ellis, French, Giessel, Bishop, Egan, Meyer, Stedman, Stevens, Micciche, Dyson

A BILL
FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to multidisciplinary child protection teams; and relating to**
2 **investigation of child abuse or neglect."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 *** Section 1.** AS 47.14.300(a) is repealed and reenacted to read:

5 (a) The department, a state or municipal agency with expertise in child abuse
6 or neglect, or a tribe recognized by the United States Secretary of the Interior to exist
7 as an Indian tribe under 25 U.S.C. 479a (Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act
8 of 1994) with expertise in child abuse or neglect may facilitate the initial
9 establishment of a multidisciplinary child protection team. The purpose of a team is to
10 assist in the evaluation and investigation of reports of child abuse or neglect, as
11 defined in AS 47.17.290, made under AS 47.17 or initiated by the department or a law
12 enforcement agency and to provide consultation and coordination for agencies
13 involved in child-in-need-of-aid cases under AS 47.10. The multidisciplinary child
14 protection teams shall

1 (1) ensure that investigations involving child abuse or neglect are
2 coordinated and conducted by trained investigators;

3 (2) take and recommend steps to avoid duplicative interviews of
4 children;

5 (3) assist in the reduction of trauma to a child and family involved in
6 an investigation of child abuse or neglect; and

7 (4) review records, provide consultation, and make recommendations
8 to the department pertaining to a child-in-need of aid case under AS 47.10 referred to
9 the team by a team member.

10 * **Sec. 2.** AS 47.14.300(b) is repealed and reenacted to read:

11 (b) A team may, to the extent feasible, be made up of

12 (1) an employee of the child protection office in the department who
13 has expertise in child abuse and neglect;

14 (2) a peace officer, as defined in AS 11.81.900;

15 (3) one or more staff members of a local child advocacy center, if a
16 center is located in the relevant area;

17 (4) a medical care provider licensed under AS 08 who has received
18 training in child abuse assessment;

19 (5) a counselor, social worker, psychologist, or physician who
20 specializes in mental health care, is licensed under AS 08, and has knowledge of child
21 abuse dynamics;

22 (6) a prosecutor of child abuse cases or a designee of a prosecutor of
23 child abuse cases;

24 (7) a victim advocate with knowledge of child abuse dynamics;

25 (8) other persons with expertise in child abuse and neglect invited to
26 serve as needed by consensus of the team as follows:

27 (A) child development specialists;

28 (B) educators;

29 (C) victim counselors as defined in AS 18.66.250;

30 (D) experts in the assessment and treatment of substance abuse;

31 (E) an attorney who specializes in child protection in the

1 attorney general's office;

2 (F) a representative of an Indian tribe, as defined in 25 U.S.C.
3 1903(8) (Indian Child Welfare Act), as designated by the tribe;

4 (G) guardians ad litem; and

5 (H) a representative of the division in the department with
6 jurisdiction over juvenile justice.

7 * **Sec. 3.** AS 47.14.300(c) is repealed and reenacted to read:

8 (c) A team may meet, review records, and conduct business in the absence of
9 one or more members of the team. When a case is referred to the team, the department
10 shall make available to the team records pertaining to the case prepared by or in the
11 possession of the department, including appropriate confidential records under
12 AS 47.10.093(b). A member of the team may use or disclose records made available
13 by the department under this subsection only as necessary for the performance of the
14 member's duties. The team may make recommendations to the department on
15 appropriate planning for the case.

16 * **Sec. 4.** AS 47.14.300(e) is amended to read:

17 (e) **A team shall meet at least monthly and may meet more often as**
18 **needed.** Meetings of a team are closed to the public and are not subject to the
19 provisions of AS 44.62.310 - 44.62.319 (Open Meetings Act).

20 * **Sec. 5.** AS 47.17.010 is amended to read:

21 **Sec. 47.17.010. Purpose.** To [IN ORDER TO] protect children whose health
22 and well-being may be adversely affected through the infliction, by other than
23 accidental means, of harm through physical injury or neglect, mental injury, sexual
24 abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment, the legislature requires the reporting of
25 these cases by practitioners of the healing arts and others to the department. It is not
26 the intent of the legislature that persons required to report suspected child abuse or
27 neglect under this chapter investigate the suspected child abuse or neglect before they
28 make the required report to the department. Reports must be made when there is a
29 reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect in order to make state investigative
30 and social services available in a wider range of cases at an earlier point in time, to
31 make sure that investigations regarding child abuse and neglect are conducted by

1 trained investigators, and to avoid subjecting a child to **duplicative** [MULTIPLE]
2 interviews about the abuse or neglect. It is the intent of the legislature that, as a result
3 of these reports, protective services will be made available in an effort to

4 (1) prevent further harm to the child;

5 (2) safeguard and enhance the general well-being of children in this
6 state; and

7 (3) preserve family life unless that effort is likely to result in physical
8 or emotional damage to the child.

9 * **Sec. 6.** AS 47.17.033(c) is amended to read:

10 (c) An investigation by the department **or another investigating agency** of
11 child abuse or neglect reported under this chapter shall be conducted by a person
12 trained to conduct a child abuse and neglect investigation and without subjecting a
13 child to **duplicative interviews** [MORE THAN ONE INTERVIEW] about the abuse
14 or neglect except when new information is obtained that requires further information
15 from the child.

Alaska State Legislature

Senate Majority Leader



Session Address:
State Capitol, Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
(907) 465-3719
Fax (907) 465-3258

Judiciary Committee
Chairman
In-State Energy Committee
Co-Chair
State Affairs Committee
Joint Armed Services Committee
Legislative Council
Rules Committee

Interim Address:
1292 Sadler Way, Suite 340
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907) 451-2997
Fax (907) 451-3526
877-465-3719

Senator John Coghill

www.aksenate.org

Date: March 25, 2014

To: Representative Wes Keller, Chairman
House Judiciary Committee

From: Senator John Coghill 

Re: CSSB 171(JUD)

I am requesting CSSB 171(JUD), *An Act relating to multidisciplinary child protection teams; and relating to investigation of child abuse or neglect,* be scheduled for hearing at your earliest convenience. I have attached the backup information for the bill.

Thank you.

Alaska State Legislature

Senate Majority Leader

Judiciary Committee
Chairman
In-State Energy Committee
Co-Chair
State Affairs Committee
Joint Armed Services Committee
Legislative Council
Rules Committee



Senator John Coghill

Session Address:
State Capitol, Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
(907) 465-3719
Fax (907) 465-3258

Interim Address:
1292 Sadler Way, Suite 340
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907) 451-2997
Fax (907) 451-3526
877-465-3719

www.aksenate.org

SPONSOR STATEMENT

CSSB 171(JUD) Multidisciplinary Child Protection Teams (MDT)

An MDT is a group of professionals that play a part in a child abuse case that work together as a group to coordinate intervention and to reduce potential trauma and improve services to Alaskan children and families.

The Alaskan Children's Justice Act Task Force requested this legislation to clarify there are child abuse cases that may not involve the Office of Children's Services (OCS) and the law is gray on whether or not a multidisciplinary team can function under state statute without the involvement of OCS.

An example would be a case in which one parent sexually abused a child and the other parent discovers the situation, reports the sexual abuse, removes the child from physical contact of the other parent, and the offending parent is arrested.

MDT's do conduct such investigations currently but there is some disagreement about whether or not this is occurring within the boundaries of the law. SB 171 takes uncertainty away.

MDT's don't just work as a group with criminal investigations. They form the nucleus of a work group for Child in Need of Aid cases that require case plans to provide counseling, training, medical care, and parenting skills to reunite families and make them whole. The Team meets monthly, reviews the progress and makes recommendations to improve services to Alaskan children and families.

Alaska State Legislature

Senate Majority Leader

Judiciary Committee
Chairman
In-State Energy Committee
Co-Chair
State Affairs Committee
Joint Armed Services Committee
Legislative Council
Rules Committee



Senator John Coghill

Session Address:
State Capitol, Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
(907) 465-3719
Fax (907)-465-3258

Interim Address:
1292 Sadler Way, Suite 340
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907) 451-2997
Fax (907) 451-3526
877-465-3719

www.aksenate.org

Summary of Changes Made to SB 171 in Senate Judiciary Committee Substitute

Page 1, line 5:

Adds to those who can facilitate the initial establishment of a multidisciplinary team *“or another investigating agency”*.

Page 1 line 11, through page 2 line 6:

Renumbered and consolidated to to discuss investigations first and ongoing OCS cases second.

Page 2, Sec. 2:

Added three additional slots on the multidisciplinary team:

1. A counselor, social worker, psychologist, or physician who specializes in mental health care, is licensed under AS 08, and has knowledge of child abuse dynamics. This actually replaces an optional position in the original bill that was worded *“mental and physical health practitioners licensed under AS 08”*;
2. A prosecutor of child abuse cases or a designee of a prosecutor of child abuse cases; Replaces consensus member from district attorney’s office in original version.
3. A victim advocate with knowledge of child abuse dynamics;

Expands credentials of two consensus members and adds an addition consensus members of the team:

1. The representative from the AG’s office must specialize in child protection.
2. The ICWA representative is designated by the tribe or tribes involved with the parents and child(ren).
3. Adds a representative from juvenile justice.

Alaska State Legislature

Senate Majority Leader

Judiciary Committee
Chairman
In-State Energy Committee
Co-Chair
State Affairs Committee
Joint Armed Services Committee
Legislative Council
Rules Committee



Senator John Coghill

Session Address:
State Capitol, Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
(907) 465-3719
Fax (907) 465-3258

Interim Address:
1292 Sadler Way, Suite 340
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907) 451-2997
Fax (907) 451-3526
877-465-3719

www.aksenate.org

SECTIONAL

CSSB 171(JUD) Multidisciplinary Child Protection Teams (MDT)

Section 1. Current interpretation of this statute is the Office of Children's Services must establish a MDT, even though in many cases OCS is not involved with a child abuse case that involves sexual abuse. This section expands the ability to recruit a MDT to assist law enforcement in criminal investigations that involve an alleged crime against a child.

Sec. 2. This section was modified to clarify who is usually part of the MDT team and lists who can be invited to be on the MDT permanently or as needed for the particular matter in an investigation.

We have added a representative of an Indian tribe is applicable; not just someone familiar with ICWA as was the old language and have included in the list of invitees a representative from Division of Juvenile Justice.

Sec. 3. This section was modified to clarify other members of the MDT can refer cases to the MDT, not just OCS. It also updates the statute to provide that confidential records in a CINA case shall be provided to members of the MDT.

Sec. 4. Mandates monthly meetings.

Sec. 5. Cleanup language to clarify the goal is to avoid duplicative interviews.

Sec. 6. Clarifies investigations and interviews can be conducted by investigative agencies other than OCS.

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 171(JUD)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Offered: 3/7/14

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): SENATORS COGHILL, McGuire, Gardner, Ellis

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to multidisciplinary child protection teams; and relating to
2 investigation of child abuse or neglect."

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

Multi disciplinary Child Protection Teams

4 * Section 1. AS 47.14.300(a) is repealed and reenacted to read:

5 (a) The department or another investigating agency with expertise in child
6 abuse or neglect may facilitate the initial establishment of multidisciplinary child
7 protection teams to assist in the evaluation and investigation of reports of child abuse
8 or neglect, as defined in AS 47.17.290, made under AS 47.17 or initiated by the
9 department or a law enforcement agency and to provide consultation and coordination
10 for agencies involved in child-in-need-of-aid cases under AS 47.10. The
11 multidisciplinary child protection teams shall

12 (1) ensure that investigations involving child abuse or neglect are
13 coordinated and conducted by trained investigators;

14 (2) take and recommend steps to avoid duplicative interviews of

*authority to
establish MDT's
expanded*

- 1 children;
- 2 (3) assist in the reduction of trauma to a child and family involved in
- 3 an investigation of child abuse or neglect; and
- 4 (4) review records, provide consultation, and make recommendations
- 5 to the department pertaining to a child-in-need of aid case under AS 47.10 referred to
- 6 the team by a team member.

7 * Sec. 2. AS 47.14.300(b) is repealed and reenacted to read:

8 (b) A team established under (a) of this section may, to the extent feasible, be
9 made up of

- 10 (1) an employee of the child protection office in the department who
- 11 has expertise in child abuse and neglect;
- 12 (2) a peace officer, as defined in AS 11.81.900;
- 13 (3) one or more staff members of a local child advocacy center, if a
- 14 center is located in the relevant area;
- 15 (4) a medical care provider licensed under AS 08 who has received
- 16 training in child abuse assessment;
- 17 (5) a counselor, social worker, psychologist, or physician who
- 18 specializes in mental health care, is licensed under AS 08, and has knowledge of child
- 19 abuse dynamics;
- 20 (6) a prosecutor of child abuse cases or a designee of a prosecutor of
- 21 child abuse cases;
- 22 (7) a victim advocate with knowledge of child abuse dynamics;
- 23 (8) other persons with expertise in child abuse and neglect invited to
- 24 serve as needed by consensus of the team as follows:
 - 25 (A) child development specialists;
 - 26 (B) educators;
 - 27 (C) victim counselors as defined in AS 18.66.250;
 - 28 (D) experts in the assessment and treatment of substance abuse;
 - 29 (E) an attorney who specializes in child protection in the
 - 30 attorney general's office;
 - 31 (F) a representative of an Indian tribe, as defined in 25 U.S.C.

highlighted categories are new or have higher standard

serve by consensus of team

1 1903(8) (Indian Child Welfare Act), as designated by the tribe;
2 (G) guardians ad litem; and
3 (H) a representative of the division in the department with
4 jurisdiction over juvenile justice.

5 * **Sec. 3.** AS 47.14.300(c) is repealed and reenacted to read:

6 (c) A team may meet, review records, and conduct business in the absence of
7 one or more members of the team. When a case is referred to the team, the department
8 shall make available to the team records pertaining to the case prepared by or in the
9 possession of the department, including appropriate confidential records under
10 AS 47.10.093(b). A member of the team may use or disclose records made available
11 by the department under this subsection only as necessary for the performance of the
12 member's duties. The team may make recommendations to the department on
13 appropriate planning for the case.

14 * **Sec. 4.** AS 47.14.300(e) is amended to read:

15 (e) A team shall meet at least monthly and may meet more often as
16 needed. Meetings of a team are closed to the public and are not subject to the
17 provisions of AS 44.62.310 - 44.62.319 (Open Meetings Act).

18 * **Sec. 5.** AS 47.17.010 ^{child protection} is amended to read:

19 **Sec. 47.17.010. Purpose.** To [IN ORDER TO] protect children whose health
20 and well-being may be adversely affected through the infliction, by other than
21 accidental means, of harm through physical injury or neglect, mental injury, sexual
22 abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment, the legislature requires the reporting of
23 these cases by practitioners of the healing arts and others to the department. It is not
24 the intent of the legislature that persons required to report suspected child abuse or
25 neglect under this chapter investigate the suspected child abuse or neglect before they
26 make the required report to the department. Reports must be made when there is a
27 reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect in order to make state investigative
28 and social services available in a wider range of cases at an earlier point in time, to
29 make sure that investigations regarding child abuse and neglect are conducted by
30 trained investigators, and to avoid subjecting a child to duplicative [MULTIPLE]
31 interviews about the abuse or neglect. It is the intent of the legislature that, as a result

*emphasizes
duplicative
interviews should
avoided*

1 of these reports, protective services will be made available in an effort to
 2 (1) prevent further harm to the child;
 3 (2) safeguard and enhance the general well-being of children in this
 4 state; and
 5 (3) preserve family life unless that effort is likely to result in physical
 6 or emotional damage to the child.

7 *Investigations and Interviews*
 * Sec. 6. AS 47.17.033(c) is amended to read:

8 (c) An investigation by the department or another investigating agency of
 9 child abuse or neglect reported under this chapter shall be conducted by a person
 10 trained to conduct a child abuse and neglect investigation and without subjecting a
 11 child to duplicative interviews [MORE THAN ONE INTERVIEW] about the abuse
 12 or neglect except when new information is obtained that requires further information
 13 from the child.

*clarifies there
 can be other
 agencies involved
 in a child
 protection case*

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2014 Legislative Session

Bill Version: CSSB 171(JUD)
Fiscal Note Number: 1
(S) Publish Date: 3/7/14

Identifier: SB171-DHSS-CSM-02-21-14
Title: MULTIDISCIPLINARY CHILD PROTECTION
TEAMS
Sponsor: COGHILL
Requester: Senate Judiciary Committee

Department: Department of Health and Social Services
Appropriation: Children's Services
Allocation: Children's Services Management
OMB Component Number: 2666

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2015 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2015 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates					
			FY 2015	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Services								
Commodities								
Capital Outlay								
Grants & Benefits								
Miscellaneous								
Total Operating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None							
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Positions

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

Change in Revenues							
---------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2014) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2015) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? No
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed?

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Not applicable, initial version.

Prepared By: <u>Christy Lawton, Director</u>	Phone: <u>(907)451-2096</u>
Division: <u>Office of Children's Services</u>	Date: <u>02/18/2014 12:00 PM</u>
Approved By: <u>Sarah Woods, Deputy Director, Finance & Management Services</u>	Date: <u>02/21/14</u>
Agency: <u>Health & Social Services</u>	

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS #1

STATE OF ALASKA
2014 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSSB 171(JUD)

Analysis

This bill would offer the option of potential changes to the current structure of multidisciplinary child protection teams (MDTs). It suggests four core team participants and optional participants who may be invited by consensus of the core team, as needed, and adds a representative with jurisdiction over juvenile justice to the list of invitees.

The current language of 47.14.300 indicates that "persons familiar with 25 USC 1901-1963" (Indian Child Welfare Act or ICWA) may be invited to join the MDT. The new language specifically designates that this invitee will be a representative of an Indian tribe as defined under ICWA, and as designated by the tribe.

It adds that Multidisciplinary Teams can accept referrals from Law Enforcement, provide consultation to child abuse or neglect investigations, and ensure child abuse or neglect investigations are coordinated and conducted by trained investigators.

This bill would require Multidisciplinary Teams to meet at least monthly.

This bill clarifies that investigators of child abuse and neglect should avoid duplicative, rather than multiple, interviews of the child in question.

The department expects no fiscal impact from the proposed legislation.

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2014 Legislative Session

Bill Version: CSSB 171(JUD)
Fiscal Note Number: 2
(S) Publish Date: 3/7/14

Identifier: SB171-LAW-CIV-02-21-14
Title: MULTIDISCIPLINARY CHILD PROTECTION
TEAMS
Sponsor: COGHILL
Requester: (S) JUDICIARY

Department: Department of Law
Appropriation: Civil Division
Allocation: Child Protection
OMB Component Number: 2961

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2015 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2015 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates					
			FY 2015	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Services								
Commodities								
Capital Outlay								
Grants & Benefits								
Miscellaneous								
Total Operating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None								
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Positions

Full-time								
Part-time								
Temporary								

Change in Revenues								
---------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2014) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2015) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? No
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed?

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Initial version, not applicable.

Prepared By: <u>Loretta Withington, Division Operations Manager</u>	Phone: <u>(907)465-5427</u>
Division: <u>Department of Law</u>	Date: <u>02/21/2014 04:12 PM</u>
Approved By: <u>Michael C. Geraghty, Attorney General</u>	Date: <u>02/21/14</u>
Agency: <u>Department of Law</u>	

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS #2

STATE OF ALASKA
2014 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSSB 171(JUD)

Analysis

The bill as proposed would allow the designation to the extent feasible of representatives from the Attorney General's office and the District Attorney's office for monthly Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meetings across the state. At the current time, assistant attorney generals and district attorneys participate in some MDT meetings.

We anticipate minimal fiscal impact on the Department of Law from this bill.

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2014 Legislative Session

Bill Version: CSSB 171(JUD)
Fiscal Note Number: 3
(S) Publish Date: 3/7/14

Identifier: SB171-DOA-OPA-02-21-14
Title: MULTIDISCIPLINARY CHILD PROTECTION
TEAMS
Sponsor: COGHILL
Requester: Senate Judiciary

Department: Department of Administration
Appropriation: Legal and Advocacy Services
Allocation: Office of Public Advocacy
OMB Component Number: 43

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2015 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2015 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates					
			FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Services								
Commodities								
Capital Outlay								
Grants & Benefits								
Miscellaneous								
Total Operating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None								
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Positions

Full-time								
Part-time								
Temporary								

Change in Revenues								
---------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2014) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2015) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? No
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed?

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Not applicable, initial version

Prepared By:	Richard Allen, Director	Phone:	(907)269-3504
Division:	Office of Public Advocacy	Date:	02/21/2014 10:00 PM
Approved By:	Curtis Thayer, Commissioner	Date:	02/21/14
Agency:	Department of Administration		

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS #3

STATE OF ALASKA
2014 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSSB 171(JUD)

Analysis

Senate Bill 171 would repeal and re-enact AS 47.14.300(a)-(e) to specify that investigations by the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Office of Children's Services (OCS) into reports of child abuse or neglect shall be conducted and reviewed by a multi-disciplinary team, consisting of professionals from specified disciplines, following specified procedures.

The bill would also generally prohibit duplicative interviews by agencies of child-victims, except where the child provides new information that requires subsequent or new interviews. If enacted as passed, the bill would impact the Office of Public Advocacy (OPA) because OPA professionals represent people in child abuse cases. There would likely be only a slight fiscal impact, if any, therefore OPA submits a zero fiscal note.

COMPARISON CHART FOR CHANGES IN MADE IN STATUTE WITH CSSB 171 (JUD)

MULTIDISCIPLINARY CHILD PROTECTION TEAMS EXISTING LAW	MULTIDISCIPLINARY CHILD PROTECTION TEAMS SENATE BILL 171
	To the extent feasible:
*Office of Children's Services staff	*OCS employee with expertise in child abuse and neglect
*A peace office as defined in AS 11.81.899	*A peace office as defined in AS 11.81.900
*Staff members of a CAC if center is located in area	*One or more members of local CAC if one is nearby
	*A medical care provider with training in child abuse assessment
	*A counselor, social worker, psychologist, or physician who specializes in mental health care, licenses under AS 08. & has knowledge of child abuse dynamics
*Mental & physical health practioners licensed under AS 07	*A prosecutor of child abuse cases or a designee of a prosecutor of child abuse cases
	*A victim advocate with knowledge of child abuse dynamics
	Others by consensus:
*Child development specialist	*Child development specialist
*Educators	* Educators
*Victim counselors defined in AS 18.66.249	*Victim counselors defined in AS 18.66.250
*Experts in assessment & treatment of substance abuse	*Experts in assessment & treatment of substance abuse
*Representatives of district attorney and AG offices	*An attorney who specializes in child protection in the AG's office
* Personns familiar with 25 U.S.C. 1901-1963 - ICWA	*Representative of an Indian tribe defined by ICWA-appointed by tribe
*Guardians as litem	*Guardians as litem
	*Representative of Juvenile Justice
Existing Statute appears to designate only OCS as able to create a multidisciplinary child protection team even though OCS is not always involved in a child protection case.	SB 171 expands the authority to creat a multidisciplinary child protection team to <i>other investigating agencies</i> such as a law enforcement agency, a tribal court, a tribe ICWA worker, or a CAC.
Has no requirements for meeting of the teams other than they are exempt from the Open Meetings Act.	Requires multidisciplinary teams to meet at least once a month and continues to exempt them from the Open Meetings Act.



February 28, 2014

Dear Senator Coghill, Chair, and Members of the Senate Judiciary,

The Alaska Children's Justice Act Task Force respectfully submits this letter of support for the passage of CSSB 171, regarding Multidisciplinary Child Protection Teams (MDTs).

The genesis of the Alaska Children's Justice Act Task Force (CJA) is the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5101) and the Victims of Crime Act (42 U.S.C. 10601). The CJA was founded in 2002 and is federally mandated and funded. The 21 members of the task force are from across the State of Alaska and include representatives from the fields of medicine, law, child protection, juvenile justice, mental health and education. Our mission is to: *Identify areas where improvement is needed in the statewide response to child maltreatment, particularly child sexual abuse, make recommendations, and take actions to improve the system.*

The CJA believes that MDTs greatly improve the statewide response to child maltreatment because they provide a coordinated response to child abuse investigations, which in turn creates better criminal and civil investigations and prosecutions of child abuse, reduces trauma and provides better services to the affected child and family. However, AS 47.14.300, the statute addressing the formation and operation of MDTs that was enacted in 1998, needs some changes to improve MDT functioning. We believe that the passage of CSSB 171 would bring about this result in several ways.

First, some MDT members are interpreting AS 47.14.300 to mean that if a representative from the Office of Children's Services (OCS) is not present at an MDT investigation or meeting, it is not an MDT under this statute and thus not subject to the protections provided in AS 47.14.300. Usually both law enforcement and OCS are part of an investigation; however, there are some investigations that are only criminal matters, not child protection matters. For example, if a child is abused outside the home and there is a protective parent in the home, OCS may not be involved. CSSB 171 would clarify that although OCS still maintains a role in the initial creation of MDTs, OCS does not need to be present at every MDT investigation in order for an investigation to be considered an MDT under this statute. In addition, this bill would clarify that OCS is not the only MDT member that can refer child protection cases to the MDT for review. (See sections 1, 3 and 6.)



Second, AS 47.14.300 currently lists who may be on an MDT, and CSSB 171 would highlight who the core MDT members are and expand the list of other potential members who may be invited to serve on an MDT by the core members. Input from these other persons can, depending on the circumstances, provide valuable assistance to the investigation or case review. (See section 2.)

Third, AS 47.17.010 and AS 47.17.033(c), statutes relating to child abuse investigations, currently state that an investigation should avoid subjecting a child to “multiple interviews” or “more than one interview”; however, sometimes it is necessary (and best practice) to have more than one interview of a child because, for example, the child is not able to describe the extent of the abuse in one interview, or because there is need for a follow-up interview due to information the subsequent investigation revealed. CSSB 171 uses the term “duplicative interviews” to clarify that repeated interviews that merely go over the same material covered in previous interviews should be avoided. (See sections 1, 5, and 6.)

Finally, CSSB 171 would require that a team meet at least once a month. Many MDTs meet on a twice-monthly basis, but the CJA recognizes that smaller communities may not be able to meet that frequently. The CJA believes that setting a monthly minimum highlights the importance of having an active, ongoing team to review ongoing investigations and cases.

Thank you very much for your consideration. If we can be of assistance or a resource for you please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Alaska Children’s Justice Act Task Force

Jan Rutherford, Chair



Alaska Children's Justice Act Task Force

**Legislative Lunch and Learn Presentation
February 2014**

hss.state.ak.us/ocs/ChildrensJustice/default.htm



Alaska Children's Justice Act Task Force

- *Mission: Identify areas where improvement is needed in the statewide response to child maltreatment, particularly child sexual abuse, make recommendations and take action to improve the system.*

Recommendations



Problem #1: MDT statutes need to be updated to match current best practice

Current MDT statute

- ...suggests that **only** OCS has the authority to convene multidisciplinary child protection teams to assist in the evaluation and investigation of reports of harm

However:

- ...many cases do not involve OCS
 - Example: child molested by neighbor, parents are protective
 - Criminal case only
- Leads to confusion, concern as to whether MDT meetings are protected by statute as currently written

Recommendation:

- Amend MDT statutes to clarify that:
 - Other MDT members may refer cases to the MDT
 - OCS does not need to be present at every MDT investigation or meeting in order for the process to be considered an MDT under this statute
- Technical amendments including:
 - Membership
 - Meeting frequency
 - MDT purpose and benefits statement

Kodiak Area Native Association



3449 Rezanof Dr. East
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
Phone (907) 486-9800
fax: 907-486-9898

February 26, 2014

Dear Senator Coghill, Chair, and Members of the Senate Judiciary,

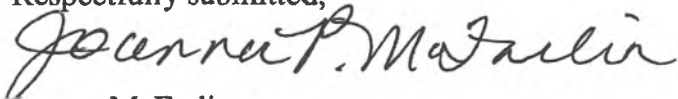
Kodiak Area Native Association's Child Advocacy Center respectfully submits this letter of support for the passage of CSSB 171, regarding Multidisciplinary Child Protection Teams (MDTs).

Multidisciplinary teams (MDT) are much more successful in addressing child abuse allegations by providing the children and family multiple professionals whom work collaboratively for their benefit. The child and family get a team of professionals with expertise and specific training to provide and coordinate services, plan the investigation, and support the family throughout the lengthy process. One agency working with the family at a time, is disjointed, often lacks in collaborative communication and can be duplicative which further traumatizes the family and child. Lack of communication between agencies often results in lower prosecution rates overall as well as more trauma and fatigue for the child and family which often result in reduced participation on their part. Working as a team is important for children and families no matter whom the perpetrator may be. Currently the MDT is only provided protection by AS 47.14.300 if there is an in home perpetrator and The Office of Children's Services (OCS) is involved to determine if the parent is being protective. With CSSB 171, it will allow us to work as a team with protection provided by AS 47.17.14.300 for the benefit of children and families regardless of the relationship of the perpetrator to the child and corresponding OCS involvement. CSSB 171 will allow the MDT to work together in any investigation of child maltreatment.

Secondly, AS 47.17.010 and AS 47.17.033(c), statutes relating to child abuse investigations, address avoiding multiple interviews for children involved in an investigation of child abuse. Often, there are child centered reasons to have more than one non duplicative interview. At times children are afraid and need time to build rapport to be brought back to talk about the concerns on another day. CSSB 171 emphasizes the word duplicative to eliminate repetitive interviews covering the same information. Not to eliminate interviews that are needed to go over new information or to give the child more opportunities to either feel safe and ready to tell what happened or to go over the extent of the abuse over separate interviews.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joanna P. McFarlin". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Joanna McFarlin
Kodiak Child Advocacy Center Director
Kodiak Area Native Association
(907) 486-9878



Copper River Basin Child Advocacy Center
PO Box 103
Gakona AK 99586

February 26, 2014

Dear Senator Coghill, Chair and Members of the Senate Judiciary,

The Copper River Basin Child Advocacy Center (CRBCAC) respectfully submits this letter of support for the passage of CSSB 171, regarding Multidisciplinary Child Protection Teams (MDTs) in the State of Alaska.

The CRBCAC fully supports the amended revisions proposed in CSSB 171. The current statute protecting the establishment of MDTs across the State of Alaska, AS 47.14.300 that was enacted in 1998, requires further revisions in order to clarify the formality and function of an MDT and its core purpose.

It is the nature and core purpose of an MDT to maintain neutrality amongst disciplines that are involved in child abuse investigations. The collaborative efforts of an MDT during a child abuse investigation are to minimize further trauma to the child by providing non-duplicative interviews and implementing further supports to the child and non-offending caregiver throughout the investigative process. This may mean carrying out more than one interview since the process of disclosure of abuse may at times require more than one interview, depending on the extent of trauma experienced by the child and child readiness at the time of the interview. CSSB 171 uses the term "duplicative interviews" in order to differentiate and clarify that additional interviews should not be conducted if to repeat or utilize the same information or material shared in a previous interview.

Additionally, it is important and essential that MDT members are routinely involved in and share case information throughout the investigative process. The proposed CSSB 171, would support that an MDT remain active and provide MDT members with the opportunity to discuss, share and implement procedures through regular meetings, at least on a monthly basis.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Please feel free to contact us anytime

Respectfully,

Gina Hoke
Executive Director

www.crbcac.com ph. 907-822-3733 fax 866-815-0626

Dedicated to providing support while improving the inter-agency response for children and families affected by child abuse.

HOW DOES THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER MODEL WORK?



Core Function of CAC



Function Provided by a Team Member

LAW ENFORCEMENT



The role of local law enforcement is grounded in public safety

If not criminal in nature, law enforcement may not take action

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

The role of CPS is to ensure that a child's home is safe

If the family/caretaker is not the alleged abuser, CPS may not take action

Immediate Response

Priority Assigned
(24-72 hours)



Child is brought to children's advocacy center

Joint Investigation Begins
Forensic Interview
Evidence Collected
Photos Taken
Witness Interview
Medical Treatment and Exam



CAC coordinates Case Review with all team members, including law enforcement, prosecution, Child Protective Services, the forensic interviewer, a mental health provider, a medical professional, and a family advocate



Case presented to District Attorney

Suspect Charged or Case Refused

Child & family receive mental health services— Family advocate works with family to assess critical resources and provide support as the case moves through the justice system

Child Removed from Home, or Case Opened for Services, or Case Closed

About CACs:

CACs are child-focused centers that coordinate the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse while helping abused children heal. CACs emphasize the coordination of investigation and intervention services by bringing together professionals and agencies as a multidisciplinary team to create a child-focused approach to child abuse cases. Although some aspects of a multidisciplinary approach to child abuse can exist without a facility, a supportive, child-focused facility is fundamental to a CAC. The location is designed to create a sense of safety and security for the children.

There are now over 750 CACs nationwide, with new centers developing in communities across the country.

Each CAC is unique in its structure. Although every accredited CAC in the country shares elements in common, *each CAC is designed to meet the needs of its particular community.*

CACs Are Accountable:

Accreditation of CACs through the National Children's Alliance assures the highest standard of care is provided to victims.

Accredited membership in NCA requires that programs meet specific standards. These standards ensure effective, efficient and consistent delivery of services by children's advocacy centers to child abuse victims throughout the country.

The Standards themselves can be viewed on the NCA website (www.nationalchildrensalliance.org).

For every standard a CAC is required to meet, there is a tangible, measurable benefit to the child and a tangible, measurable benefit to the investigation, prosecution and long-term management of child abuse cases.

CACs Prevent Abuse and Keep Children Safe:

CACs provide intervention services. But CACs also share the goal of stopping abuse before it even starts. Nationwide, and in just the last year, CACs provided child sexual abuse prevention education to more than 500,000

CHILDREN'S
ADVOCACY
CENTERS:
helping
children
heal from abuse
while holding
offenders
accountable



individuals – adults and children. Often, this was in a school setting, but CACs were also out in the community meeting with civic organizations, church groups, and neighborhood groups, to help educate and raise awareness so the community can stop this devastating pattern before it starts.

CACs Save Money:

Coordinated investigations are more efficient and more effective; CACs make this a reality.

All CACs have multidisciplinary teams that meet regularly to plan cooperative protocols and review cases that are being investigated. Multidisciplinary teams are more successful in reducing duplication, ensuring that cases do not fall through the cracks, and resolving more cases successfully. Collaborative approaches to investigation bring wider viewpoints into making decisions, help identify more resources for children, and provide a smoother experience for children and families; and CACs provide ongoing training to local communities to help support the use of multidisciplinary teams. Communities with CACs are more likely to review cases regularly, helping to work through particularly difficult cases and resolve them with the team's input. Not surprisingly, all 50 states have passed legislation requiring government agencies to collaborate on cases of child abuse and CACs are a key component to ensuring ongoing and effective collaboration.

Beyond the common sense effects, there are real, demonstrable cost-savings to using CACs. A cost-benefit analysis showed that traditional investigations cost 36% more than CAC-collaborative investigations.

CACs can save as much as \$1,000 per child abuse case by streamlining the process, creating efficiencies and providing effective services. As the National District Attorney's Association stated, "[d]ifficult economic times demand that police, prosecutors, and child abuse prevention professionals increase their efforts to stop child abuse through proven, effective and cost-effective methods. Multidisciplinary child abuse investigation teams ("MDTs") in association with child advocacy centers ("CACs") show the greatest potential for cost-efficient and effective prosecution." The numbers bear this out: 81% of investigations in CACs were coordinated between law enforcement and child protective services, as compared with 52% in non-CAC communities.

CACs Hold Offenders Accountable:

Increased use of CACs and multidisciplinary teams has resulted in increased successful prosecutions of child abuse perpetrators. In a study comparing two districts of a large urban area over a period of 10 years, felony prosecutions of child sexual abuse doubled in the district where the use of CACs nearly tripled, while no increase in such prosecutions occurred in the district in which the use of CACs remained constant.

Other studies have shown that communities with CACs were able to make faster decisions to charge criminals with crimes against children. Research also shows that defendants convicted of sex crimes against children were sentenced to longer prison terms when they had been investigated via the CAC-multidisciplinary model.



Last year, CACs provided 279,000 child victims of abuse with multidisciplinary team investigations, forensic interviews, specialized medical and mental healthcare, and victim advocacy.

Child abuse
costs us
\$124
billion
per year.¹⁰

CACs SAVE money:

an investigation using a CAC can save as much as \$1,000/child by streamlining the process, creating efficiencies and providing effective services.

What accounts for these differences? Over the last three decades, CACs have been at the forefront of efforts to improve, refine and define the way victims are interviewed, and to create a research-based methodology for forensic interviewing techniques.

The methods that specialized interviewers now use are based on extensive research showing the best ways to interview children to increase their accuracy and completeness and produce sound evidence. There is considerable agreement among experts about best practices.

Moreover, CACs are significantly more likely to record the forensic interview than non-CAC agencies conducting interviews. Recorded forensic interviews are more accurate than notes taken by interviewers, who are focused on the interview itself and not on providing a complete summary. Children's disclosures provide a powerful incentive for suspects to confess, and recorded disclosures provide direct, reliable - and often the only - evidence to corroborate the allegations and prosecute crimes. Recording also makes the interview process transparent, so that all parties know exactly how the child was questioned. And recording pushes interviewers to become more proficient and self-aware. Not only are offenders held accountable, but the system itself adheres to higher standards, ensuring a true measure of justice.

CACs Help Child Victims Heal:

Last year, CACs provided victim services to more than 279,000 children. Child victims of sexual abuse who receive services at CACs are twice as likely to receive specialized medical exams, and

four times so in cases not involving penetration.

Children seen at CACs are also more likely to receive referrals for specialized mental health treatment.

Prompt medical examinations of suspected child victims are critical to collect physical and other disclosure evidence, to begin treatment for sexually transmitted infections and to provide reassurance to the victims.

Sexual abuse victims are very likely to experience emotional trauma. They need - and deserve - appropriate mental health help. Here again the studies show that children seen at CACs were more often referred for behavioral health assessment than those from communities without CACs.

CACs recognize and respond to the need for specialized mental health treatment for child abuse victims, and have focused on treatments that have a proven track record. CACs have been at the forefront of the movement to develop specific treatment for child abuse victims, and are working directly with mental health professionals who design and test new protocols for mental health screenings especially for CACs. Moreover, the CAC movement has advanced the use of proven behavioral health treatment methods, including Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

CACs Are Effective:

Research demonstrates that caregivers in CAC cases are more satisfied with the investigation than those from non-CAC comparison sites. 97% of caregivers would tell others to seek help at a CAC.

CACs offer a child-centered, friendly location for children who have reported sexual abuse. The child-friendly environment helps the victim, while also serving the larger goal of community safety. The U.S. Department of Justice recognized and lauded this balance created by CACs, noting that children felt less intimidated at CACs than at other investigative locations.

The non-offending parents and caregivers of suspected child victims seen at CACs were more satisfied with their community's investigation process than those whose children were not served by CACs. One study cites caregivers who reported that it was the services delivered by their CAC, more than any other part of the system, that were the most important factors in helping them feel satisfied with their community's overall response. They were especially happy with the way their CAC provided comfort to children and adults, provided information about the investigation process and coordinated the logistics for them. And of course, such comfort serves a therapeutic purpose as well, since child victims adjust better when they have greater support from their parent or caregiver.



NATIONAL
CHILDREN'S
ALLIANCE



VIEW
REFERENCES
ONLINE

[www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/
NCAPolicyBriefReferences](http://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/NCAPolicyBriefReferences)



Thank you to our former Chair, Kristy
and copyeditor, Diane Goebing,
for their invaluable assistance.

CACs Are Committed to Research-Supported Practice:

Last year, National Children's Alliance and its CAC members provided training to more than 46,000 child abuse professionals, ensuring sound investigations and compassionate treatment of victims nationwide.

CACs want to make sure that all child victims of abuse, in all communities, receive the help and support that they need. CACs provide training and outreach – virtually all of it at no cost or for a low cost – to communities throughout the country. The entire landscape of the field has been affected, so that even communities without CACs have adapted to the higher standards set by CACs. Spurred on by the growth of the CAC movement, the national professional associations of prosecutors, chiefs of police, lawyers and pediatricians have all adopted recommendations for more child-centered practices in the assessment, investigation and prosecution of child abuse. There can hardly be a community that has remained unchanged by the CAC movement.

To Help:

1. Fund the National Children's Alliance to support existing CACs and develop new ones in communities lacking one.
2. Support community education through CACs. CACs provide a single point of entry for both prevention education and effective, meaningful intervention, support and resources for child abuse victims.
3. Support CACs and their multidisciplinary team model for investigation, prosecution and treatment in child abuse cases in order to reach more children who need help.
4. Promote research-supported practices for child abuse cases in:
 - a. Forensic Interviewing
 - b. Medical Intervention
 - c. Mental Health Treatments
5. Fund research projects to ensure quality and effectiveness of programming in CACs.

Half A Nation

The Newsletter of the State & National Finding Words Courses



In this issue:

Indicators of a Healthy Multidisciplinary Team

1

6

Half-a-Nation State Training Calendar

National Training Calendar 2004

7

8

Half-A-Nation State Updates

WINONA
STATE UNIVERSITY



APRI

The American Prosecutors Research Institute (APRI) provides research training and technical assistance to the National Child Protection Training Center (NCPTC) at Winona State University (WSU). APRI is the non-profit affiliate of the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA). This publication was prepared under cooperative agreement No. 2003-JN-FX-K009 from the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice, NDAA, APRI or WSU.

Indicators of a Healthy Multidisciplinary Team

Jodi L. Ashley, MSW, LGSW¹

Multidisciplinary teams (MDT) have dramatically increased in number over the past five decades, from a known three in 1958 to more than 1000 in 1985.² In 1997, 33 states indicated that they had "statewide participation" in the multidisciplinary approach to child abuse cases and 11 other states enacted statutes allowing or encouraging multidisciplinary teams.³ The longevity of multidisciplinary teams speaks to their accepted importance. The benefits of the multidisciplinary approach include reducing trauma to children, increasing the effectiveness of interventions, reducing the duplication of services, improving the quality of evidence, and clarifying roles among the various disciplines involved in investigating, prosecuting, and treating child abuse cases.⁴

Communities invested in the team approach to handling child abuse cases know that supporting a healthy, functional, multidisciplinary team is no easy task. The truly complex and challenging nature of forming and maintaining teams becomes apparent from the outset. Soliciting and maintaining the participation of diverse disciplines is an intricate process requiring dedication and hard work. The first step to building a

successful MDT is acknowledging this complex and intricate process.

In the state of Georgia, a Multidisciplinary Review Team & Facilitator Project was undertaken in 2002.⁵ The project's objective was to investigate the nature of MDT's to learn the elements necessary to make them excel. The project began with site visits to fifteen MDT's across the state. Each team held open discussions about its functioning, dynamics, and processes. Team members shared ideas regarding their success, overcoming roadblocks, and future aspirations. Strategies for handling team issues, celebrations, and evaluation were also assessed. Pre- and post-surveys were collected from team members and a general survey was collected from the 15 team facilitators as part of this project.⁶

Through these site visits and surveys, themes for healthy team functioning began to appear. After extensive analysis of the ideas collected, sixteen themes were identified as essential to the functioning of a healthy MDT. These themes became the basis for this article and the Multidisciplinary Review Team and Facilitator Handbook.⁷ These indicators, while not necessarily present in every team, represent the most significant elements of functioning teams as identified by these front line professionals. Consider each indicator and challenge yourself and your MDT to incorporate it, as your team deems appropriate.

1) Accountability for the Team

MDT's must have a plan to ensure they are functioning within their purpose and accomplishing their goals. By holding themselves accountable, MDT's can increase their credibility and demonstrate their abilities. Whether teams need minor tweaking or major overhauling, there are always ways to excel beyond current functioning. By seeking out new ideas and soliciting feedback, MDT's can work toward necessary changes and improvements. Furthermore, some MDT's may have a responsibility to uphold the standards set forth by the National Children's Alliance,⁸ state statutes, state membership coalitions, and/or local child abuse protocols. Accountability to these and other standards can be crucial to maintain funding streams and achieve the collective missions of the partner agencies.

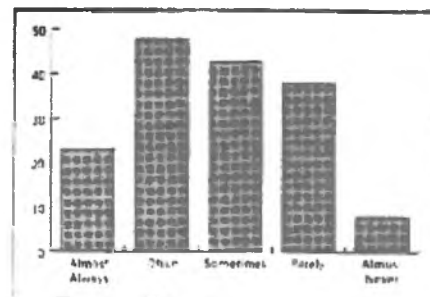
2) Accountability for Team Members

Being a member of a multidisciplinary team means one has certain responsibilities to the team. These can be as simple as attending, being prepared, completing follow-up tasks, and advancing knowledge and skills for the betterment of the MDT. As such, members are expected to uphold their duties and roles. While

individuals are responsible for themselves, unprepared or unreliable members can weaken the power of the MDT. Therefore, it becomes each member's responsibility to hold others accountable. Members must be willing to assist, teach, or even confront weak team members for the wellbeing of the MDT and for what it can accomplish for children. Significantly, almost all of this projects' pre-survey respondents reported that attending team meetings is a priority and that their team members actively participate.⁹

3) Burnout Prevention

Working in the field of child abuse is stressful and overwhelming. Being a member of an MDT can seem, in itself, even more overwhelming. MDT's can recognize the stress of this work and attempt to create an atmosphere that helps members feel connected while educating members about burnout and its prevention. MDT members can serve as supports for each other as each tries to handle the frustrations and demands of this work. While the importance of burnout prevention was noted by each team involved in this project, survey results indicate that perhaps teams should spend more time focusing on how to help team members handle this issue.



Our team serves as a source of support and/or burnout prevention (167 respondents).¹⁰

4) Celebration

With busy schedules, deadlines, meetings, and endless appointments it may seem impossible to even think about finding time to squeeze in celebration. However, celebrating accomplishments in the field of child abuse is imperative. How often have your MDT members heard "I don't know how you do it" when addressed by lay people. These people know what they are talking about - this is hard work! It is work only tackled by those strong enough and brave enough to believe they can make a difference in the life of an abused child. Celebrate this work - for each member, for the MDT, and for the children! The teams who participated in this project listed the following ideas as ways they celebrate their teams: award "Community Partner of the Month"

