



## The Mandatory Reporting Task Force | Meeting 22

*Data Subcommittee Meeting Minutes, July 17th 2024*

Facilitators: Doris Tolliver

Members: See Appendix A

Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Doris Tolliver welcomed the subcommittee.</li><li>• Byan Kelley recapped the previous conversation; the last meeting discussed the person information of a child. He introduced the guest speakers from the last meeting who have returned; Jessica Starr, April Jenkins, JP Sleeper. He also mentioned reporting requirements on disaggregated data as well as collecting data about race and ethnicity.</li><li>• Doris thanked him and introduced the directive about inter and intra agencies information sharing with guiding questions. She displayed the questions <a href="#">electronically</a>.</li></ul>
Inter and Intra Agency Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• April introduced herself and said that confidentiality is important as is communication. She said that there are MOUs in place with agencies, like law enforcement and the military, to share information. She continued that outside of that, there is a requirement of a release of information from the family member. She said that the information sharing slows down by the time a case becomes a permanency case but it depends on the situation and the types of MOUs in place. She explained a specific example of an MOU with a county and the department of public health to help facilitate public health initiatives. Doris thanked her and said that she loved the example of the MOU with the county and the department of public health. She said that this can service families without trauma. She asked if this agreement is still in place and if there are other examples of this kind of arrangement.</li><li>• April said she is not sure if the MOU is still in place but she knows about contracts with other agencies who provide services. Doris thanked her and asked if the contracts allow for information sharing of a report coming in. April said that confidentiality is written into the contracts. She said that there are prevention services through program area 3 that families can access through a self-referral or offering services to families without them being involved in an open assessment. She also mentioned a prevention plan which creates community pathways for families to receive services. She said that the contacts usually pertain to families who are involved in the system. Doris thanked her and asked for questions.</li><li>• Michelle Dossey said that this is something counties struggle with; they have difficulty sharing information with other agencies that provide services as well as with reporting parties. She said there is a lack of clarity in the law about this; there is a balance on protecting families' privacy as well as sharing their information with community services to provide them support without opening an assessment. She said that Arapahoe County contracted services and shared vague information with community partners; this created confusion for community service partners and for the family. She said that the biggest concerns is confusion in the law as well as not being able to share information to support</li></ul>



children who need it. She mentioned a program called handle with care; it informed school districts of a family's, for example, interaction with law enforcement. Doris thanked her.

- Jessica provided resources electronically; the difficulty is finding the gray area for issues that have and have not been addressed explicitly so the resources should help clarify. Doris thanked her.
- Michelle Murphy said that there is a lack of clarity in implementation in sharing information in obtaining support as well as the outcome of reports made against staff. She said that if the clarity is there, then it needs to be elevated. She also mentioned notification about the rights of parents and if they are allowed to contact children.
- Jessica mentioned 191 307 for dependency neglect records; she read the statute. Doris and Michelle said that this might be a different circumstance. Doris added that the question becomes what this means as well as providing guidance around mechanisms for information sharing to help the family, like an MOU template that ensures families are services while maintaining confidentiality requirements.
- Michelle Murphy said that there are MOU requirements in the law; the AG office has a template but it was just a reiteration of legislation. She suggested plain language clarification. Doris thanked her and asked if April's example used the template or plain language. Michelle said that the template is specific to school, DHS and law enforcement. She said that she is going to look for it and share it.
- Adrianna Hartley said that she has been drafting MOUs recently and can share the resources that she referenced since the AG's template was unclear. She said that there is no clarity; caseworkers often have questions about what can be shared. She said that confidentiality is important but many things could be achieved if there was more leniency. She also mentioned that different counties have different guidelines on this. She said that Delta County uses MOUs to connect and share information. Doris thanked her.
- April said that there is an MOU template; it was created through a task force. She said that the template can be adjusted depending on the community. She said that the MOU outlines guidance on how to share information with law enforcement and DHS. She said that not every community is willing to use an MOU; it is about 50-50. She also mentioned the resources that Jessica shared. She also highlighted Michelle's point about worry for families that do not meet the criteria for assignment; she said that confidentiality limits their ability to help. Doris thanked her.
- Dawn Alexander said that she represents child care programs; sometimes DHS or law enforcement is present and it can feel very intense for the situation. She said that knowing that 50% of departments have MOUs helps clarify why this happens. She recounted a story of findings against a director who had to step out of their role until the report was finished; it was eventually overturned but their professional standing was undermined. She said that many people do not know their appeal rights and there needs to be an understanding that someone's professional livelihood is at stake during the entire process so it would be helpful to shorten these processes. Doris thanked her.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yolanda Arredondo said there are personnel requirements that, if there is a situation, the employee can discuss it with the department. She continued that if there are founded findings that might impact someone's employment, that is not reported from the county to the agency. She mentioned extensive background checks. She also mentioned that communication between law enforcement and departments is mainly relational and based on repeated interactions. Doris thanked her.</li><li>• Dawn said that when there is an investigation against a child care director, they cannot be in the building so they are trying to run the program from the outside; this is hard for a program. She also said that most teachers get terminated as a result of the allegation; the teacher can get a new job prior to the end of the investigation meaning they are off the hook in some ways. Doris thanked her and highlighted questions from the electronic chat.</li><li>• Yolanda said that different agencies have different personnel procedures. She said that she would like legal consultation about the question around information sharing from a report made by an employer since she is assuming there are due process considerations. Doris thanked her and highlighted Michelle Dossey's electronic chat about specified mandated reporters.</li><li>• Michelle Dossey said that there is a large concern around reporting parties not knowing what happens after a report is made. She continued that there are confidentiality considerations with sharing with all reporters so there is a classification of reporters who are mandated, have an on-going relationship with the child or family, and a need to know the information to keep a child safe. She said that the county needs to certify that a reporter meets these criteria and then they have 90 days to get the information back. She said that this is often misunderstood. She said that many specified mandated reports do not take these steps to gather this information, maybe because the rules are confusing and it is hard to get information. She said that confidentiality is good and bad; the laws are confusing and it might be another task force. Doris thanked her and asked if someone is automatically a specified mandated reporter or if they have to demonstrate that. Michelle said that, during a report, they ask if a reporter is specified; if the reporter says yes, the county sends them a form to substantiate that. She said that it is not based on job titles. Doris thanked her. Yolanda said that there are relationship and role questions to help determine if someone is a specified mandated reporter which is gathered in TRAILS. Doris thanked her and asked if the relationship question is related to the child or also related to the family. Yolanda and Michelle Dossey said that it is a relationship with the child. Doris thanked them and welcomed JP. She also asked if there are designations in TRAILS to determine if someone is a specified mandated reporter. JP said that there is a picklist of the reporter types outlines in rule; the hotline worker can select a specified mandated reporter. Yolanda also said that there is a template letter that can be sent. Doris thanked them and asked if the hotline worker would determine the relationship between the child and the reporter. Michelle Dossey said that the process is different in each county; she said that Arapahoe COunty asks the reporter if they believe that they are specified, then they complete the</li></ul>
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form, and then they are listed as specified. April said that it is different between counties. Doris thanked them and said that specified reporters are granted further information but the process is onerous and confusing so there could be ways to make more information available under a certain set of requirements.

- Michelle Dossey said that this is a both and since people have weaponized information against families plus there are people who do not need to know all the information about families as well as treating families differently based on obtaining information. She said that the focus is partnering to keep families safe and supported. Doris thanked her and highlighted her point of weaponizing information. Michelle Dossey said that people weaponize knowledge that a case was taken into assessment; it can be used for good and evil. Doris thanked her and brought up that the allegation can be detrimental in itself.
- April said that harm is always to be avoided; it's important for caseworkers to know their families to understand when to share information and when to not. She said that this is why training stresses getting to know families; she thinks that caseworkers do a good job but it can be intrusive to have child welfare at someone's door. Doris thanked her and mentioned families that do not meet abuse or neglect criteria but have needs; she mentioned information sharing back to reporters that the case was screened out but that the family should be connected to resources.
- Crystal Allen Ward said that there are valid considerations about incident sharing to respond to family needs; her hope is that sharing needs can be addressed. She mentioned San Diego 211 services that connect families with specific needs; it is voluntary and they are not sharing anything about an incident but it is often spurred by a call to the hotline. She said that her point is that families can get resources without incident information being shared. Doris thanked her and asked for further thoughts.
- Michelle Dossey said that there is 23 years of family history in TRAILS; she said that it is helpful for reporters to understand that the incidents that they might be seeing could be a result of years and generations of trauma. She brings this up to help reporters have grace for families; she wishes she had more ability to share information with reporters. She encourages reporters to build a relationship with families to learn more about them. She thinks this could accomplish helping families feel better services but she worries about it being used against families. She said that in the right hands, information is great but it can also be dangerous. Doris thanked her.
- Yolanda said that when state care Colorado was a care resource for families, there was a lack of clarity if families could be referred to safe care Colorado without a family's consent. She said that she worked to obtain consent; it was hard since families did not always know that a report was made against them. She worked to alleviate their anxiety about a report being made as well as gaining consent to refer them to resources. She brings this up to describe a way to inform families about resources and making sure that families know that seeking the resources or not has no bearing on a potential case with DHS. She said that some families do not always know that obtaining services is voluntary.



She mentioned that they do not always know if the families obtained services; this was to ensure that there is less bias against families that do not seek voluntary resources. Doris thanked her and said that she thinks that anytime child welfare suggests services, it is automatically coercive since they hold the power to take children away. She also mentioned the warmline from previous directives; she asked about an opportunity to share the warmline with reporters, especially for screened out cases.

- Michelle Dossey electronically provided suggested language. She said that she thinks that reporting parties deserve to know the outcome of a call; this responsibility falls on the department which is challenging. Doris asked if this was all reporting parties or mandated reporters. Michelle Dossey responded that it should be all reporting parties but she understands the topic of the task force is mandated reporters.
- Yolanda said that she agrees; it should be limited information. She also said that reporting parties could call back to confirm if cases were assigned or not; this is ultimately what people usually want to know. Michelle Dossey mentioned also informing reporting parties about what assignment means and what they can maybe expect to have happen. Doris thanked them and asked if there were any concerns about Michelle Dossey's recommendation of providing information back to reporting parties; there were none.
- Doris asked if the standardized follow up could exist in TRAILS. JP said that he thinks so; they approach anything that relates to TRAILS through staff suggesting edits and the technology team determining how to make that happen. Doris thanked him.
- Michelle Dossey asked about auto-generated letters to the reporting party. Yolanda said that in the hotline record there is a reporter type pick list to determine if the caller is a mandated reporter or a specified mandated reporter. She said that if these conditions are met, the letter is sent either by mail, email, or phone call to notify of the disposition of the referral. Doris thanked her and suggested not changing the specified reporter process but extending that to all reporters. Michelle Dossey mentioned the oral and written report follow up; it can prompt further conversation about the outcome of reports. She said that this can be cleaned up in statute. Doris asked how many people follow up with a written report. Michelle Dossey responded that very few respond with a written report; many school districts do. Doris thanked her and suggested striking that part of the statute since it creates a burden for reporters. Donna Wilson said that the written report is an example of well intended policy that creates burden. Doris thanked her and asked her about her electronic chats. Donna said that reporters outside of the system do not always know what goes on in the system; there could be communication improvements about what is going to happen to reports. Doris thanked her and asked for additional recommendations.
- Michelle Dossey suggested better cross reporting between law enforcement and county departments. She said that the statute requires departments to share reports with law enforcement and the DA; this was hard to manage for a large



	<p>county with many law enforcement entities. Doris thanked her and mentioned how MOUs can facilitate a relationship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bryan asked if anyone thinks that the written report requirement should not be stricken from the law; there were no comments.</li><li>• Yolanda said that she was a part of a conversation with a reimagining child welfare task force that discusses redirecting reporters to resources; it also is exploring including an introduction on the hotline that explains what the line is for and directing people to a warmline for resources. She said that the task force is examining the logistics of the introduction as well as how to redirect a call. Donna said that this is a great idea but it assumes that people know the threshold for abuse and neglect. Yolanda said that the message tried to clarify what abuse and neglect includes. Doris thanked her and suggested that the letter to reporters could include resources for the family.</li><li>• Doris asked for any other comments; there were none.</li></ul>
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Doris and Bryan thanked the subcommittee members for their contributions.</li><li>• Crystal mentioned an interest in specified mandatory reporters. Doris agreed and highlighted how it can help to service families. Michelle Dossey mentioned public health nurses as important tools to help support families.</li></ul>

**Appendix A:**

Ashley Prow  
Michelle Dossey  
Jade Woodard  
Adriana Hartley  
Michelle Murphy  
Sara Pielsticker  
Donna Wilson  
Ida Drury  
Dawn Alexander  
Yolanda Arredondo  
Ayla Bullock (for Shawna McGuckin)