



Mandatory Reporting Task Force | Meeting 17

April 24, 2024, Meeting Recap

Training Subcommittee

Overview

The Mandatory Reporting Task Force is legislatively charged with analyzing the effectiveness of Colorado's mandatory reporting laws in keeping children safe, connecting families with the resources they need, and providing clarity to mandatory reporters. Integral to this analysis, the task force will continue to examine the relationship of these laws to systemic issues and disproportionate impacts on under-resourced communities, communities of color, and people with disabilities.

Subcommittee Work Overview

This meeting focused on the progress of two subcommittees: the Training Subcommittee and the Reporting Processes Subcommittee. The Training Subcommittee discussed training requirements for professional license renewal and standard training for county department processes. The Reporting Processes Subcommittee addressed reporting processes for joint mandatory reporters and planned to tackle the remaining directives in subsequent meetings. Additionally, the discussion touched upon the structure of Phase Two, which involves reviewing and finalizing recommendations through a series of meetings and group discussions.

Training Subcommittee Discussion

This subcommittee's opening discussion centered on analyzing mandatory reporting training requirements for individuals applying for or renewing professional licenses. Reference was made to a similar provision in Iowa, the only direct example of a specific requirement for training for mandatory reporters with certification or licensing contingent upon completion. Reference to Iowa's law isn't an endorsement by the CPO, but is merely an example of language and ideas to consider.

Bryan Kelley also put forward that the language in the Louisiana statute regarding mandatory reporting uses the term "may," indicating that it's not a requirement but rather an option for agencies. This permissive language allows for tailoring the requirements in a profession-specific manner, with each profession determining how these requirements might apply to their own licensing standards. Louisiana allows agencies to offer continuing education credits to mandatory reporters who complete training, creating a positive incentive for completion.

Bryan anticipates that recommendations put forward by the subcommittee will likely have overlap between different directives and won't be specific to each individual one.

Subcommittee members were given notecatchers to write down their thoughts on what they like and/or dislike in examples from other states, their suggestions for ideas/language, and any additional notes.

Training Requirement Discussion Summary

- Possible policy mechanisms for standardized training requirements:
 - Differentiate between mandatory reporters requiring licenses and those who don't.
 - Prioritize training through accrediting agencies, allowing for credit acquisition similar to Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits as seen in Louisiana.
 - Flexibility to align training efforts with existing licensing requirements, like ethics credits.
- Concerns:
 - Administrative oversight and costs for regulatory agencies.
 - Implementation costs of a learning management system (LMS).
 - Enforcement challenges across diverse professional groups.
- Questions and discussions:
 - Effectiveness of language choices in regulations (such as "strongly encouraged" versus "may")
 - Control over licensing at the state level and what can be regulated.
 - Targeting mandatory reporting training based on reporting rates and outcomes.
 - The question was raised whether mandatory reporting training should be required more for fields where reporting is high but outcomes are low. Teachers were mentioned as one of the groups with high reporting rates and low outcomes, although the varying duration of teaching licenses could present a challenge.
- Periodic training updates and its impact on license renewal.
 - Bryan provided information about states that have recurring requirements for mandatory reporting training, such as every 2-3 years.
 - New York was mentioned as an example that has implemented legislative changes requiring new training focused on topics like implicit bias and disproportionate impacts. Under this law, everyone

needs to complete the new training by a certain deadline, even if they have received training in the past.

- Importance of specifying responsibilities for training provision and content consistency.
- Importance of meaningful learning outcomes and accountability in mandatory reporting training.
- Shift from compliance-based to skill acquisition approach:
 - Implementing a minimum passing score to ensure understanding and meaningful learning outcomes.
 - Illinois example of implicit bias training with pre-tests and post-tests for progress measurement.
- Emphasis on accountability and enforcement:
 - Advocacy for a shorter, more targeted list of mandated reporters based on skill sets.
 - Mandating not just reporting but reporting well.

Training on County Procedures Discussion Summary

The second directive being considered by the Training Subcommittee focused on standardized training regarding the process to determine which reports meet the threshold for assessment and investigation. This aims to improve mandatory reporters' understanding of what happens after they make a report. The discussion helps illuminate why it is crucial to address this issue effectively by articulating the challenges involved and identifying who is impacted. Providing better information to mandatory reporters could lead to more informed decisions about whether to report, ultimately benefiting families by ensuring appropriate responses.

The subcommittee had a brainstorming session where participants focused on generating concrete ideas for the training component related to the county department's process for determining reports that meet the threshold for assessment and investigation. They discussed the importance of providing clarity to mandatory reporters about what happens after they make a report, including the screening and decision-making processes within the county department.

Suggestions included:

1. Creating a two-part training video that outlines the mandatory reporting process and the county department's procedures for assessment and investigation, in addition to information on how to decide whether to report.
2. Incorporating implicit bias training into the curriculum to help reporters recognize and address their own biases.

3. Offering follow-up resources and support for reporters who make calls that do not result in investigation, including access to supervisors for further explanation.
4. Emphasizing the trauma outcomes of reporting and the potential impact on families, encouraging reporters to consider alternative options like warmlines for support.
5. Addressing systemic issues related to the high number of mandatory reports made on some households, especially those receiving disability services.
6. Providing clear communication about the screening process and criteria for assessment to reduce frustration and improve understanding among reporters.
7. The need for clarity to ensure that families receive accurate information about what to expect after a report is made.
8. Focusing on skill acquisition rather than mere compliance to ensure reporters grasp the training material effectively.

Overall, the aim is to equip mandatory reporters with the knowledge and understanding they need to make informed reports and support families effectively, while also addressing systemic issues within the child welfare system.

Consistency across counties in terms of communication practices is crucial to ensure that privacy rights are upheld while still providing necessary information to reporters.