



The Timothy Montoya Task Force To Prevent Children From Running Away From Out-Of-Home Placement | Meeting 15

March 6th, 2024, 8:00 am-11:00 am Virtual Meeting (Zoom)
Facilitators: Keystone Policy Center (Trace Faust & Doris Tolliver)
Members: See Appendix A

<p>Welcome & Approval of Minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task force Chair Stephanie Villafuerte welcomed the task force and did a roll call. She moved to approval of the full task force minutes. She asked for edits; there were none. Ashley Chase motioned and Dennis Desparrois seconded. The full task force minutes were approved. Stephanie moved to approval of the prevention subcommittee minutes. She asked for edits; there were none. Jenna Coleman motioned and David Lee seconded. The prevention subcommittee minutes were approved. Stephanie moved to approval of the intervention subcommittee minutes. She asked for edits; there were none. Elizabeth Montoya motioned and Brian Cotter seconded. The intervention subcommittee minutes were approved. Stephanie moved to approval of the intervention subcommittee recap. She asked for edits; there were none. Kevin Lash motioned and Brandon Miller seconded. The intervention subcommittee recap was approved. Stephanie moved to approval of the prevention subcommittee recap. She asked for edits; there were none. Ashley Chase motioned and Becky Updike Miller seconded. The prevention subcommittee recap was approved.
<p>Introduction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trace Faust welcomed the task force and mentioned an upcoming opportunity to gather in person. They shared the roadmap for the rest of the meetings. Today is the full task force review of the subcommittee work and reviewing the recommendations. The survey at the end will tell facilitators if the task force wants to move forward with the recommendations. April's meeting will be in subcommittees; topics of discussion are temporary placement in the intervention subcommittee and restraints in the prevention subcommittee. May's meeting will be a reconvening of the entire task force to review the recommendations from the subcommittees. June's meeting will be in subcommittees; topics of discussion are education on trauma-informed recovery for the intervention subcommittee and education on risks of running for the prevention subcommittee. July's meeting will be a reconvening of the entire task force to review the recommendations from the subcommittees. August's and September's meetings will both be whole task force discussions to finalize the report. Trace also provided an overview of the directives required by legislation. Six are complete and three are ongoing. The future meetings will address the other directives. Trace asked for questions and there were none. They asked the intervention subcommittee to present first.
<p>Intervention Subcommittee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doris Tolliver outlined the documents with the draft recommendations. They will focus on recommendations 3 and 4. Norma Aguilar Dave will lead the presentation. The facilitators want to hear questions, what people like, and



overall sentiment. Thoughts will also be collected in the survey at the end of the meeting today.

- Norma summarized the recommendations. Recommendation 3 regards tiers of risk from low risk to extreme risk. This is what is considered when a child runs and will be evaluated ongoing throughout a child's stay. She said that one of her concerns is the people assessing risk level would probably be the youngest, most inexperienced folks so she wonders about calling for a master's level person to evaluate the risk of a child. She asked for further input. Bryan Kelley said that rather than the task force making the categories, the recommendation would direct a third-party entity to create not only the risk assessment tools covered in previous recommendations, but also the risk levels. The task force would not create these tiers. The appendix has several of the risk factors that the subcommittee discussed including pregnancy, medical issues, and others. Norma continued that the third-party entity would create response protocols for each of the categories. If a child is placed in a high risk category, it would trigger a certain response. Doris explained that there is a higher or a lower risk; there is recognition that this is deficit based language but it is a placeholder. There might be different language to shift to that would be more asset based. Doris thanked Norma and asked for clarifying questions.
- Brian Cotter said that in lieu of prevention, sometimes this is just pre-planning. He included that the pre-planning can include where to look for children when they run. He suggested screening to tease out some of the locations that a child would run to. Doris said that this is an important point; recommendations 1 and 3 connect to each other. This sentiment would be included in recommendation 1 to assess not only the level of risk but also doing risk mitigation if there is a certain level of risk including a preemptive plan. Stephanie said that she appreciates the thoughts and it feels like there is room to be more specific in recommendation 1 to include what Brian is talking about. If the task force wants it in the report, the information that Brian is talking about could be included. Doris thanked her. She also highlighted Brian's chat comments about post run recovery interviews to prevent a youth from running again. Norma said that she appreciates these comments; she was not sure how in the weeds she should get. Most residential programs ask these questions at admission to determine level of risk, location when they run, and more so they have this information ready. Doris thanked her; she also said that the recommendations might not need to be too prescriptive but the nuance can go in the report. Brian said that he agrees with adding nuance to the report; he is envisioning a pre-plan like a summary of what intervention teams should do when a child runs and the information would be pulled from all of the assessments. This is to avoid having to put out a research team while the child is gone. Doris asked if this would happen for every youth. Brian said that there is room to discuss that so maybe only the highest risk children have these plans so they can respond in a crisis. He defined higher risk as children with risk of trafficking, rather than more independent older teens with lower risk. Elizabeth Montoya said that she agrees with Brian and this risk assessment should be done at intake and evaluated at the therapeutic level along the way. Beth McNalley said that she thinks that it's crucial to have an



intake and return assessment since these things can change when a youth is missing. There should be an initial data collection on every level like a photo and the information that the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) needs. This is to make sure they don't have less information if a situation turns into a crisis. Doris thanked her and highlighted her point of having parts of a pre-plan so the assessment is not just to determine risk level but to gather information to have parts of the plan in place to intervene appropriately. Norma said that programs already have many of these things in place. The part that is missing is the planning ahead. Doris asked for more questions and feedback.

- Stephanie followed up on Norma's point and emphasized avoiding duplicating existing practice. She asked what existing practice is and suggested a recommendation of consistency between programs. Norma said that they usually always take a picture to have in the file; there is a lack of consistency in evaluation and assessment so this is something to work on. The third party can be the entity to create the consistency between the programs in terms of what assessment is being done and what information the program is trying to get such as, "have you run before and if so where do you run to".
- Stephanie asked for anything in regulations to reference in the report. Dennis Desparrois said yes and that now is a good time to formalize what the task force wants to see since rule sets are open now. They are on the Secretary of State's website. The citations are 7701, 7705, 7714, and 7705. Norma said that she is not sure if the recommendation should go into regulations but it would be great to have a standardized assessment when a child enters any program. It would be even better to have the documents follow the child if they move programs. Dennis said that he agrees and that he wants these recommendations to be embedded in regulations so everyone will be operating in the same way. Doris said that this is what they are getting at to know what information is already required to be collected. This will be helpful to think about what additional information should be collected. Bryan said that recommendation 1 overlays recommendation 3; he reminded the task force of recommendation 1 and said that in many ways, the comments being made today have already been captured in previous conversation. Dennis said that they should not wait for the contract being underway; they can still work in rule to require providers to use state prescribed forms. There is good flexibility to continue to move forward. Doris asked for a time-table and Dennis said that the rule sets are open now and they will go to the state board in the next few months.
- Jordan Steffen brought up how information travels with a youth, she asked for anything outside of TRAILS to have information traveling. She asked if they need to recommend a new system for this. Norma said that it would be great to have a system for information sharing that travels with the child; this does not exist yet. Once consents are signed, they can contact previous programs and hope that they send the information quickly. Doris thanked her and asked about medical passports that travel with the child. Dennis said that they do reasonably well with this but it depends on the referral program. County departments of human services do better than regional accountability entities. He is not sure if the regional accountability entities even have that ability.



	<p>Doris thanked him and asked for any lessons learned with this program. Dennis suggested that they can do a provider facing rule that says that they could not accept a referral without a medical passport. Doris thanked him and said that the task force is not thinking about implementation yet but it is helpful to think about the nuance needed in the recommendations or the report; she appreciates the discussion. She asked for further feedback. Stephanie said that she likes the recommendation and thanked the subcommittee for their work. Doris thanked her and said that it sounds like folks largely agree with Stephanie. She asked for any reservations to account for those in the record and to also find opportunities to address the concerns. There were none.</p>
Prevention Subcommittee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trace moved to the prevention subcommittee regarding hardware. Jenna Coleman said that the topic was actual hardware to deter runs in out of home placements; the subcommittee recognized the need to do this in the most supportive and trauma-informed way as well as the least restrictive level of care. They looked at physical infrastructure to prevent runs to keep children from leaving. They also looked at delayed locks, secured perimeters, crosswalks and traffic signals, and advanced technology like motion sensors. With all of this, they looked at assessing youth to make sure the placement is appropriate and reviewing this on a regular and consistent basis. They also recognized that hardware should not be a substitute for staffing. Trace asked subcommittee members to add anything else. There were none. Trace highlighted the different levels (room, facility, perimeter, community) that Jenna suggested. Stephanie thanked Jenna and highlighted Brandon Miller's use of technology and his focus on not wanting to treat children like criminals. Jenna added on to that and said that they don't want the facility to look like a prison with high walls but that the facility has laser sensors to ensure safety. Trace asked for content questions. • Dennis said that these things are already allowed; there is nothing that prevents delayed locks or lasers. Trace said that this is helpful; the subcommittee considered consistency across facilities. There won't be a recommendation to make this allowable but a recommendation could instead seek to make it consistent. Dennis said that it would hurt the placement continuum if every facility had these tools, some just can't do it. He mentioned the assessments to make sure children who need more security go to those facilities. Trace asked if the children in high risk categories go to these facilities and asked about the policy on this topic. Dennis said that this doesn't exist and this is his point. Rather than having every facility have these things, they should work on ensuring that children go to the correct facility. Trace said maybe the recommendation is not to mandate the hardware across all facilities but across some facilities that are linked to the assessment. Kevin Lash said that in his experience, placement decisions always happened informally. They knew his son was a runner but it was an informal placement. He asked about how prevention interacts with the law. Trace asked him to explain more. He said that if a child runs, what can a facility do? What level of emergency is it when a child runs? Locks are great but what a facility will do or not do is preventative. Trace said that they will continue to explore this;



today is to get clear on the hardware. Trace asked for Bryan's help explaining. Bryan said that the next conversation in subcommittees will be about physical restraints. Trace highlighted his focus on the levers pulled when someone runs. Kevin said that the topics are developing differently than he was thinking. Bryan said that they are building emergency response protocols into the future conversations. He asked for concerns if this focus is not addressed. Trace thanked them.

- Norma said that the task force needs to be careful about placing children in high risk categories into single facilities equipped specifically for those children. She also brought up children at human services who need placements. She asked to hear from Brandon about this since he works in a facility. She also said that she thinks that the entity that is hired to create these things should consider thinking through this, making sure there is something in place to make sure children in high-risk categories are not all in the same facilities since these children need a lot of individual care. Sometimes the setting is the reason children want to run so there should be some intervention there. She knows she is getting into the weeds, but she wants to be careful about funneling all the children in high risk categories into a few facilities. Trace asked the task force's thoughts on this. Jenna said that this is already happening; there are a lot of children in high-risk categories living together and this is not going away anytime soon. This is what the system can accommodate. She reiterated trauma-informed, least restrictive tools and reassessing to step down children to lower levels of care. Children are not stupid; they know they are going to a high level of care, but it can be trauma-informed to work them through the program and step them down to lower levels of care. Trace said that this is not what they heard from Norma. Norma's point was about not doubling down on making it so only a few facilities house high risk runners; so a few facilities have extensive hardware and many do not have any. Trace asked if this was a good capture. Norma said yes. There are difficult children in every facility but let's not pigeonhole 3 facilities to accommodate children with a high risk of running. Trace thanked them.
- Dennis wanted to point out the complexity and said that there might be local zoning issues, that current regulation structures might not support this, and issues around funding for each child. There would need to be a way to define high risk as to not fund every child as if they were high risk since these are higher cost beds. Trace thanked him and reminded the task force to focus on making recommendations and being bold. Dennis said that he wants realistic recommendations to avoid missing an opportunity. Trace asked if delayed locks in every facility would be too bold. Dennis said that it depends on where the delayed locks would go. Trace said that the localities would decide where the delayed locks would go and the subcommittee was less in the weeds and more stating that delayed locks are important. They asked Brandon to jump in but he had computer problems. They said that they appreciate Dennis's point and highlighted that if something is an option, then facilities may opt out. Norma echoed what Trace said and voiced that she wanted to come up with something first and then make it doable. She highlighted Ashley Chase's chat about one-time funding for facilities to improve their hardware. Trace thanked



her. Stephanie appreciates Dennis's point and said that this conversation is not "either/or". She highlighted what Ashley wrote in the chat. There are creative ways to accomplish this. She highlighted chats about hardware being least intrusive and she is not sure if the task force agrees about hardware in general. The second is about the mechanism to impact the hardware recommendation. The task force first needs to decide if they like hardware in general and then move on to deciding how to implement this. Trace thanked her. Brian said that the money will come if this is something the legislature wants to do. His example was body cameras on police. If they demonstrate the need, the money will come. Trace thanked him. Dennis said the task force should honor Timothy Montoya and he was in a facility with delayed locks and a perimeter fence but he ran away. Elizabeth said that she was thinking the same thing. Ashley also said that she also appreciated that but the goal is to reduce runs. The recommendation won't stop all runs, but it is a piece of a puzzle. There are facilities who would like to do this, and they can increase facilities who have these measures. But this won't fix the problem entirely in a vacuum. The task force can recommend, in the report, to not pick and choose recommendations since they all go together, and they won't work siloed from each other. Trace thanked her for her comments and moved the task force to a break.

- Trace brought the task force back. Trace directed the task force to an electronic poll. The question was "do you agree conceptually with the recommendation that hardware should be a part of a continuum of runaway prevention in Colorado.". One person responded no, and 12 people responded yes.
- Trace moved the task force forward to the "how" part of the conversation. Since the task force agrees that this is part of what should be happening as a part of care, what should the task force ask for or want to see? Becky Updike Miller suggested a survey of all of the facilities to see what they already have. For example, she would imagine that many already have these things, but they don't have children since they can't afford staffing. Trace thanked her. Ashley said that she imagines, for example, that many facilities want to build a fence, but they can't due to cost. She suggests a grant fund for a one-time cost to build a fence. It would be funded through the general assembly and facilities can choose to opt in; they don't have to do it if they don't want to. It would be a lighter touch and more fiscally mindful. Trace thanked her and built on the landscape inventory to invite higher-need facilities to apply to a first round. Ashley called out guardrails on the fund to ensure it is doing what it needs to do.
- Trace asked the task force for their thoughts on this. They asked for major concerns with the idea. Becky added that it would be great to ask facilities on what they want. Trace said this could be a function of the landscape analysis. Dennis said that he appreciates what Ashley said about a soft touch. There are some facilities who cannot put in fences. They have to know about the placement continuum first. Trace asked if he liked Ashley's idea. Dennis said that he liked it.
- Norma said that she agrees with Dennis: they don't want to change what the program is trying to accomplish with hardware. It is a matter of understanding



the facility and working from there. They could make some guidelines around types of facility or justifying why a facility should not have a specific type of hardware. Stephanie said that she likes the idea of an assessment by a third party with a report to the legislature because there is so much unknown. Trace brought up an urgency component with facilities who would benefit from simpler solutions. There are unknown future needs and known needs now. The grant could run concurrent as a pilot project prior to the inventory of facilities and subsequently funding them or acting on subsequent recommendations. Trace asked if the task force likes these ideas.

- Stephanie deferred to Norma and Brandon since it can be hard to think about without knowing the problem fully. She highlighted Trace's point of the urgency of now. Trace thanked her. Norma asked if it would take a year to get the information. She said that having this information would be invaluable for the task force. She thinks they could get it done in three months. Stephanie said that doing this informally could be great; she was commenting on doing it formally with a budget request. 2025 would be the year where they would get the evaluator funding. Norma suggested finding a way to get this need met currently. Stephanie said that they could start with the foundation. Becky said that the Colorado Association of Family and Children's Agencies (CAFCA) has many member facilities so the private providers could be inventoried rather quickly. Dennis also said they could get a survey out quickly. Trace asked Brandon his thoughts. Brandon agreed with what everyone was saying about how each facility is unique. Surveying will take time but in a situation where there is funding available and the facilities outline what is unique to them, they can work with the state to help inject money. He referenced a Colorado Department of Education funding example. No facility can't use upgrades. Trace thanked him. They also recapped the task force's thoughts: There is a clear, current need for hardware funding in facilities. A recommendation could be one-time funding for facilities to upgrade hardware as well as a best practice list around hardware implementation. Trace asked if this is a good capture. Norma asked if this would be done after the survey is done with CAFCA in the next few months. Trace said that the survey might not be necessary but could be used to justify future recommendations. The survey is for additional data and more recommendations can come from that. There is an immediacy since all facilities can use funding for hardware, the task force can recommend funding to implement some of the best practices found around hardware. The survey can come later and inform future recommendations. Stephanie said that she appreciates this thinking. She would think it's helpful to get the survey now to refine the recommendations. They asked if this sounds right; moving forward in addition to the survey to refine the recommendation or make needed adjustments. There were no comments.
- Trace asked about next steps to help Becky. Becky appreciated Norma's offer to help. It could be a survey, phone calls, and/or CAFCA meetings. She will draft something and meet with Dennis and Laurie Burnie to make sure they can meet with everyone. She thinks it can be done in a month. Norma said that she can help visit facilities too. Her only caution about a CAFCA meeting would be that they would not get specific unique needs; she wants to pick



their brains and get creative ideas. Becky said that she was thinking both/and. Trace also offered some time to this. Becky said that she likes the idea of pointed questions. Brandon said that to clarify, the hardware conversation should include supervision considerations. Trace thanked him. Stephanie offered to help. Jordan also offered help. Dennis suggested getting data from foster Colorado. Becky asked Dennis and Laurie to meet to get a sense of who to talk to.

- Trace asked if best practices already exist around accountability. Dennis said that there could be a presentation around this; Laurie Burney has a team that has the authority to do this. They approve trauma-informed plans for facilities. The use of the hardware should be trauma-informed so there could be a quality assurance component that her performance management outcomes team oversees. Laurie said that she is happy to bring the team to do a presentation. This would be about what currently exists. It's in the beginning phases but they could add this responsibility. Trace thanked her.
- Stephanie asked Laurie to explain a little more about the unit. Laurie said that Dennis and her serve as a regulatory authority with licensing and monitoring. Licensing and monitoring are to make sure people meet the minimum standards captured in volume 7. One unit is specific and outside of licensing and monitoring and focused on quality of care. They partner with providers. They do not enforce violations but ensure trauma-informed care plans are implemented. There are assessment tools with rubrics that gather data. They partner with the facility to create goals to improve the facility's services. They also work through provider's specialization. They also provide training in a staff academy that all facility staff can participate in. It centers around trauma-informed care, needs to address runaways and specific groups of children. Stephanie thanked her and asked how their work could inform today's conversation. Laurie said that trauma-informed care implementation means that children are less likely to run away and avoid therapy. It is a means of addressing this with the youth prior to them leaving. It is also about putting plans in place prior to a child entering a facility. This is to address what works for the child and prevent runs. Stephanie said that she hears her say that trauma-informed measures relate to all of these other components. She asked about anything that she has seen, in her experience, that would be trauma-informed and less intrusive to prevent children from running in the hardware topic. Laurie said that children have rights. Restricting rights with hardware like restraining and secluding are discussed in law. These are children with mental health and behavioral health concerns. They are not criminals. It is already in law and regulations to allow delayed locks; most facilities already have them. It is important to focus on the clinical side and wrap services around the youth that they serve. It's also important to identify behaviors early and have a plan in place when a child displays a certain behavior. Stephanie thanked her and commented that her philosophy is in many of the recommendations. She also mentioned that these things are already being used but it is a matter of consistency. Laurie said that she agreed; it is about consistency and implementing plans in proactive ways. Stephanie thanked her. Brandon said that he 1000% agrees; treatment outcomes have to be the goal. His point is that the science behind mental



	<p>health is way behind many other sciences. Society is headed in the right direction but many of these things to stop behaviors need years or decades to develop. Infrastructure with hardware is a short-term solution; he would love to use them less every year and rely more on human infrastructure. They should be investing in this as much as possible. Trace thanked him for highlighting urgency as well as future goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trace asked Jordan and Bryan about the directives. They asked if there are more components to consider. Jordan said no; they can coordinate going forward. They can include the survey in the report. They are going to pause the recommendation until after the survey. They can revisit it after that is done. They can also keep moving on the roadmap. There might need to be more meetings to bring the survey results back and revisit hardware. At this point, it is best to pause drafting and revisit it later. Bryan also said that he heard best practices about hardware. He said that this document is not ready to go yet but this is something he will keep in mind revisiting the recommendation. Jordan asked for Laurie's assessment tools and the corresponding recommendations. Dennis said that Laurie will get in touch. Trace said that the survey is still relevant for recommendation 3 and it's important to get feedback on how recommendation 4 is currently written. Trace asked if this was okay with Bryan and he said yes. Trace moved the task force to the survey and directed the task force to submit responses. This is for the purpose of refining recommendations as they are currently written and knowing there is more to come on hardware. Trace welcomed public comment.
Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No public comment.
Next Steps and Adjourn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trace brought the task force back and asked people to finish up the survey before the end of the day. They asked again for public comment; there was none. They finally thanked the task force for a great discussion. They mentioned adding an additional meeting and thanked the folks taking a lead on data collection. Stephanie thanked everyone. The task force adjourned at 11 AM; the next meeting is April 10th.

Appendix A:

- Stephanie Villafuerte
- Bryan Kelley
- Anna Cole
- Ashley Chase
- Norma Aguilar Dave
- Jenna Coleman
- Brian Cotter
- Dennis Desparrois
- Chelsea Hill
- Kevin Lash
- David Lee
- Dr. Renee Marquardt
- Beth McNalley



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