

## Mandatory Reporting Task Force | Meeting 27

November 6, 2024, Meeting Recap

### 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.

### Review of Recommendation Voting

The task force voted in an online survey on each of the final recommendations. Trace Faust reviewed the results and offered space for reflections from task force members. All recommendations received majority support and passed.

Trace also clarified that comments from "no" votes will be included verbatim as an addendum to the report, while comments from "yes" votes will not be included to avoid redundancy.

#### *Results of the voting:*

- Recommendation 1: 100% approval (31 out of 31 votes).
- Recommendation 2A: 100% approval.
- Recommendation 2B: 96.8% approval (one "no" vote).
- Recommendation 3: 100% approval.
- Recommendation 4A: 87% approval (27 "yes" votes, four "no" votes).
- Recommendation 4B: 96.8% approval (30 "yes" votes, one "no" vote).
- Recommendation 4C: 100% approval.
- Recommendation 5: 87% approval (27 "yes" votes, four "no" votes).
- Recommendation 6: 80% approval (25 "yes" votes, six "no" votes).
- Recommendation 7A: 74.2% approval (23 "yes" votes, eight "no" votes).
- Recommendation 7B: 87% approval (27 "yes" votes, four "no" votes).
- Recommendation 8: 96.8 % approval (30 yes and 1 abstention) (Trace will follow up to make sure the voter intended to abstain.)
- Recommendation 9: 93.5% approval (29 "yes" votes, two "no" votes).
- Recommendation 10: 100% approval.
- Recommendation 11: 75% approval (24 "yes" votes, seven "no" votes).
- Recommendation 12: 96.8% approval (30 "yes" votes, one "no" vote).
- Recommendation 13: 90.3% approval (28 "yes" votes, one "no" vote, two abstentions).

- Recommendation 14: 90.3% approval (28 "yes" votes, two abstentions, one "no" vote).
- Recommendation 15: 90.3% approval (28 "yes" votes, two "no" votes, one abstention).
- Recommendation 16A: 90.3% approval (28 "yes" votes, three "no" votes).
- Recommendation 16B: All but one voted "yes".
- Recommendation 16C: 100% approval.
- Recommendation 17: 96.8% approval (30 "yes" votes, one "no" vote).
- Recommendation 18: 90.3% approval (28 "yes" votes, three "no" votes).
- Recommendation 19A: 100% approval.
- Recommendation 19B: All but one voted "yes".

The final report, due by January 1, will capture all voting results and include narratives from the CPO team detailing the process. The report will attribute votes and comments to provide full transparency.

### **Closing Thoughts**

Doris Tolliver invited participants to share reflections as the task force concluded its work. Doris acknowledged the extensive efforts invested over many months and recognized the significance of the group's accomplishments. Gina Lopez expressed her appreciation for the space held for diverse perspectives, particularly those from underrepresented communities. She highlighted the meaningful, difficult discussions around safety for children in her community and the value of this process in prompting further questions and discussions. Gina emphasized her commitment to continuing this work beyond the task force, aiming to ensure children's safety and system accountability.

Michelle Dossey expressed her gratitude for being part of the task force, calling it the best she has experienced in her 30-year child welfare career. She praised the facilitation and management, especially acknowledging the thorough research provided by Stephanie's office, which included nationwide data from Bryan Kelley to support informed decision-making. Michelle appreciated the opportunity to contribute her perspective from within the child welfare system, especially in a group dedicated to respectful and professional reform efforts. She commended Doris, Jordan Steffen, Bryan, Stephanie Villafuerte, Kathy Wells, and Trace for their work in making the process seamless and enjoyable.

Jessica Dotter echoed previous sentiments, expressing gratitude to the Keystone and CPO teams for their hard work and for creating a positive experience on the legislature-directed task force. She noted the effective facilitation, inclusive environment, and the way challenging topics were managed. Jessica appreciated the opportunity to contribute as a lawyer and learn from diverse perspectives, highlighting the experience as a valuable part of her career.

Stephanie Villafuerte expressed deep gratitude, particularly to her Ombudsman team, recognizing Jordan as a pivotal contributor since the beginning of the task force's formation in 2021. She acknowledged Bryan's high-quality research as a new standard for task forces, highlighting its critical role in supporting informed decisions. Stephanie also praised the Keystone team—Trace, Doris, and Addie Fischer—for creating a professional and thoughtful

environment conducive to learning. She thanked her co-chair Kathy Wells, appreciating her long-standing partnership, expertise, and dedication.

Stephanie extended heartfelt thanks to all task force members, emphasizing the privilege of working alongside such passionate individuals who consistently prioritized the well-being of children and families. She noted that the members' dedication and presence, even through challenging times, served as a reminder of the purpose behind their work and fueled her own commitment. Stephanie closed by honoring the group's impact, recognizing them as remarkable contributors to Colorado's community.

Crystal Ward Allen acknowledged the importance of the research conducted by Bryan, noting that it provided valuable national perspectives and context for the conversations. This research helped ensure the discussions weren't happening in a vacuum, offering the group meaningful reference points for deeper conversations about mandated reporting policies.

Doris expressed appreciation for Donna Wilson's role in keeping the focus on disproportionality and the legislative mandate throughout the task force's work. Early on, the group had discussed the importance of addressing disproportionality in child welfare, but as the process moved forward and the details of the task force's recommendations were refined, that focus risked being lost. Donna, however, pushed the group to return to the original purpose and intent of the task force, ensuring that the issues of disparities and disproportionality remained central to the final recommendations.

Trace acknowledged Stephanie's leadership, noting her ability to allow space for conversation and change, even when the issues at hand are challenging. Trace especially appreciated her flexibility in allowing the task force's conversations to evolve.

Doris expressed deep gratitude for the task force members who brought lived experience to the table, both professionally and personally. Doris acknowledged the vulnerability that these individuals showed in sharing their stories and how it enriched the process. She highlighted the importance of integrating lived experience into policy discussions and how it directly contributed to the success of the recommendations.

### **Next Steps and Legislative Support**

Legislative involvement will be key in the implementation of these recommendations. The bill that created this task force was sponsored by Representative Froelic and Representative Young (who was not re-elected). Stephanie assured the task force that there is a willingness among some legislators to champion the recommendations through the legislative process.

### **Challenges with Funding and Systemic Changes**

Stephanie discussed the difficulty of obtaining funding, especially given a state budget deficit and potential budget cuts. Some recommendations, especially those related to systemic changes like building new systems (e.g., warmlines, decision tools, training) require substantial

investment, which may not be possible due to fiscal limitations. Statutory changes are more feasible, and it is expected that these will move forward even without new funding.

The task force may need to explore creative solutions, such as pilot programs or starting smaller-scale projects.

### **Engagement and Involvement**

The group was encouraged to remain engaged, despite the likelihood that full implementation might take several years. Stephanie suggested that even if funding is delayed or reduced, the task force could still make progress through collaboration and leveraging existing resources, particularly in areas like warmlines and training. Stakeholders may need to continue supporting the work in ways outside of formal legislation and funding.

### **Opportunities for Feedback and Continued Involvement**

The group will be asked to fill out a survey to provide feedback on the task force process, what worked, and areas for improvement.

The importance of using the expertise within the group for the design and implementation of training was highlighted, especially as the state works to update mandatory reporting training.

Gina raised a point about the complexity of hotlines for child welfare, specifically the need for a hotline tailored to specific communities. She mentioned that she found a hotline from Albuquerque, which serves her particular jurisdiction and could be a resource.

There was mention of a new Equity lead in the Division of Child Welfare, Vanessa Dantes, who is working on better tracking of race and ethnicity in child welfare cases, which aligns with task force recommendations.

### **Closing and Ongoing Communication**

The CPO team committed to keeping the task force members informed and involved, particularly regarding stakeholder engagement and future legislative actions.