

Chisago County Citizen Review Panel 2015 Annual Report

Mission Statement

To provide an opportunity for citizens to play a role in insuring children are protected from abuse and neglect, and to encourage and help build nurturing homes for children in our communities.

Panel Members

Michelle Anderson
Bob Gustafson
Kim Houle
Katy Maier
Jessica Sterbentz
Bethany Kozel
Traci Besch

Meetings

The Citizen Review Panel met monthly, from January through June and September through December, for the year of 2015. The first half the year, the meetings were held at the Chisago County Government Center in Center City, Minnesota. The second half of the year, the meetings was held at the Lakes Region EMS facility, in North Branch, Minnesota.

Activities

- May 2015, Katy Maier and Michelle Anderson attended the National Citizens Review Panel Conference in Portland, Oregon
- August 2015, Kim Houle and Jessica Sterbentz attended the Child Abuse Prevention Conference in Duluth, Minnesota
- June 2015, Bethany Kozel, Traci Besch, Michelle Anderson, Katy Maier and Karlene Smith attended the conference regarding the Minnesota Safe Harbor Law in Center City, Minnesota
- Over the course of the year, our panel has done 3 redetermination recommendations.
- Addition of two new panel members in December 2015, Traci Besch and Bethany Kozel.

Egregious Harm File Review

Ongoing Case Review

In January of 2015 the Star Tribune reported on a Pope County case in regards to abuse and how the county deals with the screen in/screen out process. Due to this recent event Chisago County Health and Human Services suggested the Chisago County Citizen Review Panel take a look at some of their own files to determine if the citizens on the Panel agree or disagree with the way the cases were handled.

The Chisago County Citizen Review Panel reviewed 10 cases from 2014. During further discussion about the cases, the Citizen Review Panel along with Chisago County Health and Human Services has come to

the decision to do further investigation to see what changes have been made in 2015 and if these changes have had an impact on the way DHS screens in or screens out cases. The panel will also discuss what has worked well in the past and what is currently not working well. We will discuss the possible changes in the future. At the conclusion of this process, the Chisago County Citizen Review Panel will make recommendations.

The current investigation and recommendation project will continue into 2016 as we do further review of the 2015 cases. Recommendations will be given in 2016 after completion and discussion by the panel.

Looking Ahead

The Citizen Review Panel members will complete the current project of case reviews and give recommendations in 2016. In an effort to build the panel, recruitment and retention efforts will be considered and discussed as we move forward.