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The Story of the Children's Bureau, 21st Century Child Welfare: 1987-2012

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Elizabeth Mertinko: [00:00:01] Good afternoon, and welcome to the 11th of 12 monthly webinars celebrating the Children's Bureau's Centennial Year. This is the 4th and final historical webinar we will offer. The first 3 historical webinars discussed the Children's Bureau from its founding in 1912 through 1986.

Today's webinar, *The Story of the Children's Bureau, 21st Century Child Welfare: 1987 to 2012*, describes the last 25 years of the Bureau's history, which includes an unprecedented number of legislative and programmatic changes.

Before we begin, just a few housekeeping items. First, please note that we have muted all telephone lines to minimize background noise. We will open the lines at the conclusion of the presentation to allow questions and comments from our audience, and we do encourage your participation at that time.

Also, your feedback on these webinars is very important to us. We will be asking for your comments at the conclusion of today's presentation and ask that you take a few minutes to share them with us. Finally, the slides and a recording of today's presentation will be available at the Children's Bureau Centennial Website at <https://cb100.acf.hhs.gov/>. We will share this information with you again at the conclusion of today's webinar.

Today's webinar focuses on the work of the Children's Bureau between 1987 and 2012. During this time, the field benefited from greater-than-ever access to data and knowledge about the experience of children and families affected by child abuse and neglect, foster care, and adoption. The Children's Bureau played a large role in developing this understanding through its data and research efforts. And in response, the Bureau implemented numerous programs to address the issues that have come to light, including independent living services for youth aging out of foster care; nationwide child abuse prevention and family preservation initiatives; expansion of permanency options, including resources to support adoption as well as alternatives such as subsidized guardianship and kinship care; and efforts to enhance the child welfare workforce.

To further improve the field's effectiveness in these areas, the Bureau placed increasing emphasis on flexible funding, program coordination, evaluation and accountability, and strategic training and technical assistance.

Our narrator today is Carl Rochelle. And at this time I'd like to turn our discussion over to Mr. Rochelle.

Carl Rochelle, Narrator: [00:02:15] Thank you, Elizabeth. The first three webinars covered the Children's Bureau's history from its creation in 1912 through 1986, setting the stage for the Bureau's passage into the 21st Century. This webinar addresses more recent events and legislation that will bring us right to the present day.

When we left off, the Children's Bureau was improving data systems to collect more accurate state-by-state and nationwide data on child abuse and neglect, foster care, and adoption. Doing so resulted in a deeper understanding of the families and children affected by child abuse and neglect, foster care, and adoption, which led to a number of legislative and policy changes during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Better quality data at the national level about children in foster care quickly revealed that a growing number of older youth were remaining wards of the state until they reached legal age. Unable to return to their families of origin, and in many cases considered too old to be adopted, these youth instead "aged out" of the foster care system with little preparation or support.

By the early 1980s, some state and local child welfare systems had already begun to make efforts to address the problem. In 1986 Congress created the first federal program to support independent living services within Title IV-E, P.L. 99-272 which required the Children's Bureau to help states establish initiatives to prepare foster children ages 16 or over for a more successful adulthood. That year, the Bureau funded seven demonstration grants; three universities also received grants to create training materials for foster parents and youth workers.

Meanwhile, the crack cocaine and AIDS epidemics of the 1980s had resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of infants born exposed to drugs or HIV. Growing numbers of these infants ended up as "boarder babies;" meaning they stayed in hospitals even after they were well enough to go home, while child welfare agencies looked for appropriate kin or foster family caregivers.

As early as 1986, the Children's Bureau was funding demonstration projects to explore solutions. Projects sought both to prevent maltreatment and foster care placement by helping families care properly for their medically fragile infants, and to recruit specially trained families to provide medical foster care while pursuing more permanent options for those in care.

In 1988, Congress passed the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act, which authorized funding for additional program demonstrations. These were aimed at preventing infant abandonment; addressing the needs of abandoned infants and young children, particularly those with AIDS; providing appropriate homes for these infants, either with their birth families or foster families; and recruiting and training health and social service professionals.

In 1991, there were still an estimated 10,000 boarder babies in 865 hospitals throughout the United States. One quarter of these infants remained in the hospital from 21 days to more than 100 days beyond medical discharge. That year, the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act was reauthorized and established the National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center, which still operates today.

On April 15, 1991, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services underwent a major reorganization. Child-oriented programs from the Family Support Administration, the Maternal

and Child Health Block Grant, and the Office of Human Development Services including ACYF, were consolidated into the newly created Administration for Children and Families. The same year, NCCAN was moved out from within the Children's Bureau and became a separate entity within ACYF, providing it with greater visibility and control over budget and policy initiatives.

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Despite the significant investment of resources to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect since NCCAN had been created in 1974, data showed that the incidence of maltreatment remained at epidemic levels. In 1990, the U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, which had been established under the 1988 amendments to CAPTA, published its first report: "Child Abuse and Neglect: Critical First Steps in Response to a National Emergency." The report, and the failure of a system in place to respond, the report suggested 31 critical first steps to control the emergency and develop a new national child protection strategy.

The First National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect was convened in 1974 and has been convened approximately every other year until today. It has been the only federally-sponsored national conference devoted to the issues of child maltreatment, and serves as the nation's leading trainer and technical assistance event for practitioners, policy makers, advocates, and researchers.

NCCAN and the Children's Bureau developed the *Child Abuse and Neglect User Manual Series*, which was first published in the 1970s and provides guidance on identifying, preventing, and effectively responding to child maltreatment. Topics of the User Manual from the 1990s focus on child neglect, crisis intervention, the role of law enforcement and mental health professionals in child maltreatment.

The most recent edition of this series, which began in 2000, updated information from the previous manuals and addresses new issues and significant changes that have occurred in the service delivery systems for children and families, newer children affected by substance abuse and domestic violence, and the role of child care providers and first responders.

In the summer of 1990, the Secretary of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Louis W. Sullivan, M.D., created an unprecedented initiative to galvanize nationwide efforts to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect. The initiative aimed to promote coordination of public and private child abuse and neglect prevention activities, to increase public awareness of the problem, and to encourage all sectors of society to participate in finding a solution.

In 1990, the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) awarded a grant to the University of North Carolina Injury and Research Prevention Center and five satellite sites to conduct research projects on the etiology and impact of child maltreatment. The projects, collectively known as LONGSCAN, work collaboratively through the use of common assessment instruments and have tracked children and their families at multiple points in time, from the age of 2 years through 18. The large dataset has permitted in-depth exploration of critical issues associated with child maltreatment.

Leaders in the 1980s and early 1990s faced considerable challenges to improving the Child Welfare System. Due to rising family poverty rates, fallout from the substance abuse and AIDS

epidemics and increasing teen pregnancy rates, among other factors, the population of children in foster care would nearly double between 1986 and 1995. Workers increasingly carried large, complex caseloads, and state and community systems struggled to address these challenges with limited resources. States would require resources, support and flexibility to create and disseminate effective, new service approaches in the years ahead.

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Less than a year after President William Jefferson Clinton's election, August 10th, 1993, he signed his first major piece of child welfare legislation -- The Family Preservation and Support Services Program Act. This law was passed in response to continuing claims that due to severely inadequate funding for preventive services, federal financing perpetuated an incentive to remove children from their families and place them in foster care.

The program authorized nearly one billion dollars over five years to fund services to promote family strength and stability, enhance parental functioning, and protect children. The program also allowed states to provide services to help reunify families after an out-of-home placement, and to devote more funds to staff training.

One important provision of the Family Preservation and Support Services Act was the requirement for states to engage in a broad community-based planning process to determine an appropriate mix of services and supports. In addition to planning for a continuum of services for at-risk children and families, states were encouraged to explore cross-disciplinary staff training and coordination with other social, health, education, and economic service programs. This was the first time that states were formally urged to plan for services across programs and funding streams.

Two other provisions of this law had lasting value. First, it established the Court Improvement Program, which provides grants to improve state courts' handling of child welfare cases. The courts use these funds to assess the foster care and adoption laws and judicial processes, and to develop and implement plans for system improvement. Second, it provided additional funding for states to create or enhance their Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information Systems, or SACWIS in exchange. Participating states agreed that their SACWIS will support reporting to National Data Systems on child abuse and neglect, foster care, and adoption.

This program still operates today, and has greatly enhanced the quality and availability of data within those national systems.

Advances in technology have had a revolutionary impact on child welfare. Once it became possible to collect, store, analyze, and disseminate data on a large scale, it also became possible to conduct more and better research, and to monitor child welfare systems by setting goals and measuring outcomes, data on numbers of children involved with the child welfare could be quantified and analyzed. Other data helped eliminate workforce issues. All of these advances contributed to a significant leap in knowledge about American child welfare.

The Children's Bureau's ongoing support for SACWIS development, implementation and improvement has had a far-reaching impact on the nation's child welfare system. As states' ability to gather and analyze data became more sophisticated, the Bureau produced more

comprehensive and reliable information about children and families at a national level. This in turn aided Congress in passing legislation and authorizing programs to help those who needed it most.

During the past 20 years, improved data has prompted more effective responses to the many issues, including racial disproportionality, the needs of youth aging out of foster care, and the co-occurrence of child maltreatment, conditions such as substance abuse, and domestic violence.

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In 1994, Congress authorized a new Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Program. These projects initially allowed up to ten states greater flexibility in the use of federal child welfare funding to test innovative approaches to achieving program objectives.

During the first two years, demonstration projects in Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Indiana, North Carolina, Oregon, and Ohio tested approaches such as subsidized guardianship and kinship permanence, capped Title IV-E allocations and flexible funding through local agencies and services to caregivers with substance use disorders. Later projects have explored the use of managed care payment systems and intensive service options, post-adoption services, Tribal administration of Title IV-E funds, and enhanced training for child welfare staff.

The 1994 Social Security Amendments also reauthorized HHS to review the conformity of state child and family service programs with requirements in Titles IV-B and IV-E. These reviews had been taking place for years; however, States and Congress were increasingly dissatisfied with the reviews' strict focus on assessing compliance with procedural requirements, without regard to child and family outcomes.

Children's Bureau staff began a long process of developing a new system of reviews to meet legislative requirements while providing more insight into how children and families were faring. As early as fiscal year 1995, the Bureau began conducting pilot tests in several states of the review process that would later become known as the Child and Family Services Reviews, or CFSRs.

The early 1990s saw much debate about interracial adoption. In 1994, Senator Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio, responding to urging from prospective adoptive parents in his home state, successfully attached the Multiethnic Placement Act to a law that was already moving through the Senate. MEPA, as it became known, addressed the issue of racial disproportionality in two ways. First, it codified the application of civil rights laws to adoption and prohibited the delay or denial of a child's adoptive placement solely on the basis of race, color, or national origin of the child or prospective parents. Second, MEPA required diligent efforts to recruit and retain foster and adoptive families that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the children for whom homes are needed.

Just two years later, MEPA was amended to clarify the intent to prevent discrimination by removing a provision allowing states to consider the child's ethnic, racial, and cultural background, and the prospective parents' ability to meet related needs. In placement decisions, IEP also strengthened compliance and enforcement procedures, including the withholding of federal funds.

In the early 1990s, the nation's attention was captured by a series of shocking news reports describing tragic child deaths due to maltreatment. As a result, in its 1992 reauthorization of CAPTA, Congress required the U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect to develop a report on the nature and extent of child abuse and neglect fatalities, and how these deaths might be prevented.

After more than two years of extensive research, study, and public hearings, the Board issued *A Nation's Shame: Fatal Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States* in 1995. The report offered an in-depth analysis of current conditions, and 26 recommendations to improve the country's child protection system. Many of the report's recommendations became areas of focus for discretionary grants in the coming years.

The reauthorization of CAPTA in 1996, P.L. 104-235, reflected many of the concerns at the time. It added new state requirements to address problems in the child protection system, including safeguards against false reports of child abuse and neglect; delays in termination of parental safeguards, or rather parental rights; and a lack of public oversight of child protection. In response to the latter, CAPTA provided for federal grants to establish Citizen Review Panels in each state. These were intended to examine the policies and procedures of state and local agencies to determine whether the agencies were effectively carrying out their responsibilities for child protection, foster care, and child death review.

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In keeping with the Clinton Administration's emphasis on collaboration and integration among child- and family-servicing systems, the 1996 CAPTA reauthorization created a new program, called the Community-Based Family Resource and Support, or CBFRS, grants. These grants reflected the theory that public and private child abuse prevention programs should work together toward common goals. As a result, the CBFRS grants required state lead agencies to establish statewide networks for family support programs to support a coordinated continuum of preventive services, and to maximize funding for those services.

The 1996 CAPTA reauthorization also brought significant change in how child abuse prevention and treatment work was carried out at the federal level. First, it abolished NCCAN as a separate entity within ACYF, and instead provided the option for an Office on Child Abuse and Neglect to be created within the Bureau. The Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, or OCAN, was tasked with providing leadership and direction on CAPTA and Children's Justice Act programs, as well as other initiatives related to child abuse and neglect. At the same time that OCAN was created, in December 1997, the Children's Bureau underwent a larger reorganization.

In addition to eliminating NCCAN, the 1996 reauthorization of CAPTA repealed a 1988 requirement to establish an Inter-Agency Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, which included representatives of 30 member agencies drawn from the Cabinet departments and the Office of Personnel Management.

Despite the repeal of their mandate, taskforce members agreed that it was important to maintain the connections that had been formed and to continue their work. As a result, they changed the name to the Federal Interagency Work Group on Child Abuse and Neglect (FEDIAWG), which is now led and coordinated by the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect. More than 40 federal

agencies are represented, and continue to meet every quarter to discuss collaborative projects and opportunities for partnerships.

Increased adoption was one of the concerns of the revitalized Children's Bureau in 1995. By President Clinton's proclamation, National Adoption Week was expanded to the full month of November for the first time.

In July 1996, a program announced priority areas for adoption opportunities demonstration grants that furthered the strategic plan's goals. These included strategies to increase adoptive placements for minority children and those with developmental disabilities; efforts to expand approaches to permanency, such as concurrent planning and voluntary relinquishment; and programs to more effectively prepare foster and adoptive parents for transracial and transcultural placements. Agencies were effectively carrying out their responsibilities for child protection, foster care, and child death review.

In keeping with the Clinton Administration's emphasis on collaboration and integration among child and family-serving systems, the 1996 CAPTA reauthorization created a new program called the Community-Based Family Resource and Support, or CBFRS Plan.

In 1999, the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation released *Blending Perspectives and Building Common Ground: A Report to Congress on Substance Abuse and Child Protection*. The result was a key partnership between the Children's Bureau and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to co-fund the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare.

Building on this work, President Clinton issued an Executive Memorandum on Adoption in December, 1996. He called on the department to work with states, communities, and children's advocates to develop a plan for doubling the number of adoptions and permanent placements during the next 5 years, from 27,000 adoptions and permanent placements in 1996, to 54,000 in 2002.

After consulting with more than 600 foster and adoptive professionals, policy experts, and advocates, the department responded. Its report, "Adoption 2002," was issued in February, 1997, and outlined a series of policy and practice-related steps toward achieving the goals. The recommendations from the Adoption 2002 report became the framework for the Adoption and Safe Families Act, or ASFA. Members of both parties participated in drafting the law, which was signed by President Clinton on November 19, 1997.

ASFA reauthorized the Family Preservation and Support Services Program, renaming it the Safe and Stable Families Program. For the first time, the law established that the child's health and safety were to be paramount in making decisions about the child's safety and welfare.

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The Children's Bureau was tasked with issuing regulatory guidelines, and helping states bring their laws and policies into compliance with ASFA. It also monitors and administers the Adoption Incentive Program, which began in FY 1998, and was most recently reauthorized with an emphasis on older children in 2008.

The Children's Bureau also has administered the Adoption Excellence Awards since 1997. This program seeks to recognize states, agencies, organizations, businesses, individuals, and families that have demonstrated excellence in providing safe, stable, and nurturing adoptive home-style families for children in foster care.

In the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliations Act of 1996, Congress directed the Secretary of HHS to conduct a national longitudinal study of children who are at risk of abuse or neglect, or are in the child welfare system. In response, the Children's Bureau initiated the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being, known as NSCAW. NSCAW was the first national study to examine child and family well-being outcomes in detail, and seek to relate those outcomes to families' experience with the child welfare system as well as to family characteristics, community environment, and other factors. Data were collected in five waves between 1999 and 2007; a new cohort was established in 2008.

The Children's Bureau had been mandated to create a new state's monitoring system since 1994, but ASFA specifically required HHS to establish outcome measures to track state performance in protecting children. To do so, the Children's Bureau established an advisory group with representatives from public and private child and family services agencies and advocacy organizations, juvenile and family courts, and state government. In the fall of 1998, the group created guiding principles for selection of outcome measures. After analyzing public comments on a preliminary list of outcomes and measures, the Bureau published a final list of seven measures reflecting child safety, permanency, and well-being in August, 1999.

These measures were used in the first of a series of annual reports required by ASFA: *Child Welfare Outcomes 1998*, published in 2000. This report was the first ever to analyze outcomes in child welfare on a national scale. It was intended to establish the baseline performance of each state, using data from both NCANDS and AFCARS. The state participation was incomplete, but all 50 states did submit data on at least some elements.

As the Bureau undertook efforts to report child welfare outcomes, it also began establishing new child welfare review processes. The Bureau issued final regulations in January 2000 for a process modeled on a system originally developed by Alabama and pilot-tested in several states. The first Federal Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) began in 2001. Reviews assessed state child welfare services for substantial conformity with the outcome measures, as well as seven systemic factors including functions such as data systems and training.

After the first round of 52 reviews, conducted between 2001 and 2004, no state was found to be in substantial conformity with all of the seven outcome areas or seven systemic factors. Between 2004 and 2007, states implemented program improvement plans, or PIPs to make improvements in areas that were not in conformity with required standards. A second round of reviews was conducted between 2007 and 2010.

In 2011, the Children's Bureau reassessed how the reviews were conducted to identify system improvements and ensure consistency with recent amendments to federal child welfare law. The Bureau is synthesizing comments from states, tribes, national organizations, advocacy groups and individuals in preparation for a third round of reviews.

How youth who "aged out" of foster care fared as adults was a subject of increasing concern throughout the 1990s.

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Two important pieces of legislation around the turn of the century enhanced resources and strengthened state accountability to help older youth leaving foster care achieve self-sufficiency. The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program was created by the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. This program doubled the funding available for independent living programs and provided flexible grants to states and tribes to support older foster youth in a wide variety of ways, including help with education, employment, financial management, housing, emotional support, and connections to caring adults. For the first time, these services were required to be offered to youth ages 18 to 21 who had aged out of the foster care system.

A few years later, Chafee was expanded further under Title II of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendment of 2001. This law authorized payments to states for postsecondary education and training for youth who had aged out of foster care.

Chafee also required the Children's Bureau to create a data collection system to track State Independent Living services for youth, and to develop outcome measures that could be used to assess states' performances in operating their Independent Living programs. The Bureau published the final rule for the National Youth in Transition Database, or NYTD, in February 2008. Data collection began in October 2010. Outcomes measured by the initiative include financial self-sufficiency, experience with homelessness, educational attainment, positive connections with adults, high-risk behavior, and access to health insurance.

The George W. Bush Administration brought new priorities -- particularly healthy marriage, fatherhood, and support for faith-based community agencies. However, it also saw the continuation of investment in promoting child safety, and increasing the number of adoptions from foster care.

Early CFSR findings demonstrated complex challenges faced by state child welfare programs and suggested the need for more integrated technical assistance to help states meet their PIP goals and achieve true changed systems. Quality Improvement Centers, or QICs, were one new strategy employed by the Children's Bureau. The QICs began as a pilot initiative in 2001 to promote development of evidence-based knowledge about effective child welfare practice and systemic change, and to disseminate this information in a way that informed and altered practice at the direct service level.

The QIC is a decentralized approach that moves responsibility for determining areas of focus, reviewing applications, and monitoring grant operations from the federal staff level to a more localized level. Local level grantors were believed to have more hands-on knowledge of where services were needed, the ability to provide on-site monitoring and technical assistance more efficiently, and the potential to form professional networks that would outlast federal funding.

The initial regional QIC research topics focused on clinical casework supervision, families impacted by substance abuse, engaging diverse communities, and reported for neglect and adoption. A later group of QICs focused on other important topics such as privatization in child

welfare, non-resident fathers, early childhood, differential response, and representation of children in child welfare. Based on the success of the initial projects, additional QICs were funded between 2005 and 2009.

The Children's Bureau also began working as early as 2000 to increase collaboration among its National Resource Centers and Clearinghouses. In 2004, the Bureau funded seven new National Resource Centers and adopted a strategy to create a more formalized, coordinated T&TA network. This included creating a single point of entry for accessing T&TA, encouraging close coordination among technical assistance providers, and enhancing the evaluation of technical assistance efforts. While the newly funded Resource Centers had unique topical focuses, all of the centers were to support a focus on family-centered, community-based, and individualized services.

In the same spirit of coordination, the Children's Bureau created a new information services, spanning the full spectrum of child welfare topics in June 2006 with the launch of Child Welfare Information Gateway. Information Gateway consolidated and expanded on the Bureau's two federally-mandated clearinghouses -- the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information and the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse -- which had formerly represented different aspects of the child welfare system with some overlap. Today, Information Gateway's scope covers the continuum of child welfare topics from prevention to permanency and many other important related subjects. The clearinghouse provided a full range of services to support the field, and its website received over 5,745,000 visits in FY2012.

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The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2006 reauthorized the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program and provided funding over a five-year period to implement a Regional Partnerships Grants program for the purpose of improving permanency outcomes for children affected by methamphetamine and/or substance abuse.

Building upon the groundwork laid from the blending perspectives in 1999, this legislation was in direct response to the recognition that parental substance abuse is a key factor underlying the abuse or neglect experienced by many children in the child welfare system. In FY 2007, ACF awarded 53 Regional Partnership Grants to applicants across the country. The program was reauthorized and extended programs in 2016, and new demonstration projects through FY2016. In FY2012, 17 new 5-year programs were funded and 8-two year extensions were granted by the Social Security Act.

The latest phase in technical assistance provisions was initiated in 2008, when the Children's Bureau funded five Regional Implementation Centers focused on strategies to achieve sustainable, systemic changes and improved outcome for children and families. The Implementation Centers expand the T&TA Network's ability to provide in-depth and long-term consultation and support to states and tribes in addition to working with the T&TA Network. Each center has formed partnerships with states and tribes in its regions to execute programs that achieve sustainable, systemic change for greater safety, permanency, and well-being for families.

By the turn of the century, it was apparent that efforts up to that point had failed to resolve the staffing crisis plaguing child welfare agencies since the mid-1980s. In 2000, the Children's

Bureau sponsored a National Child Welfare Training Conference, bringing together university and agency partners to explore effective practices in building a competent workforce. It also launched an Online Network of Child Welfare Training Resources. Private child welfare organizations, including the American Public Human Services Association Alliance for Children and Families and the Child Welfare League of America played a critical role during the early years of the new century by helping to sustain attention to the issue through their own initiatives and research.

At the request of Congress, the U.S. General Accounting Office published a report in March 2003 titled, *HHS Could Play a Greater Role in Helping Child Welfare Agencies Recruit and Retain Staff*. The report identified recruitment and retention challenges faced by child welfare agencies, and suggested that those challenges were affecting safety and permanency outcomes for children in foster care based on findings from the first 27 CFSRs. Noting that HHS was not currently targeting staff recruitment and retention as a priority issue, the GAO recommended that the Secretary take further action to help child welfare agencies address the problem.

The Children's Bureau concurred with many of the study's findings, and responded by using discretionary grant funds to implement several new initiatives during the next decade.

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In 2008, the Bureau launched its latest project to build capacity of the Child Welfare Workforce and cultivate leadership within child welfare agencies. The National Child Welfare Workforce Institute serves as a workforce resource to all members of the Bureau's T&TA Network. The Institute's activities include Leadership Academies for Managers and Supervisors, Child Welfare Traineeship Programs at universities offering M.S.W. and B.S.W. degrees, development of peer-to-peer networks, and dissemination of resources at the national level. Five additional workforce grant projects implemented targeted workforce development interventions and traineeships. The Workforce Institute is tasked with conducting a cross-site evaluation of these regionally-based projects.

Congress reauthorized a number of important programs during the Bush Administration, providing continued support, and often new emphases to critical Children's Bureau programs. The Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments, enacted in January 2002, reauthorized the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program.

The Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003 reauthorized several Bureau programs, including CAPTA, Adoption Opportunities, and the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act. This law also reauthorized the CBFRS program, which renamed the Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, or CBCAP, as it is commonly called.

The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 increased protections for children against sexual exploitation and abuse by requiring fingerprint checks for all prospective foster and adoptive families, and requiring HHS to create a national central registry of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect.

Several additional laws enacted in the first decade of the century focused on the importance of adoption and permanency. The Adoption Promotion Act of 2003 reauthorized the Federal

Adoption Incentives with an emphasis on children ages 9 and older. This law also required the Children's Bureau to produce a report to Congress on adoption and other permanency outcomes for older youth in foster care, which was published in 2005.

The Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children's Act sought to expedite interstate placements by establishing time limits for interstate home study requests and offering incentives for timeliness. It also provided for a number of additional protections for children in out-of-state foster care, such as provision of children's health and education records to foster parents, and increased frequency of caseworker visits.

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 reflected the importance of preserving family connections for children in the foster care system and the growing support for kinship care as a permanency option. For the first time, guardianship assistance payments were authorized under Title IV-E for children of whom a relative was willing to take legal guardianship. This allows children to maintain connections with biological parents while living safely with family. Connections to kin are further supported through independent living funds, as well as grants supporting kinship navigator programs, family-finding, family group decision-making, and residential family treatment programs.

Another significant change in this law was the opportunity for federally recognized Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and tribal consortia to directly operate a Title IV-E program for the first time. The Bureau helped implement this requirement by providing outreach and support to tribes, including one-time grants of up to \$300,000 for tribes to develop a Title IV-E plan.

At the same time that these legislative changes were being enacted to support timely adoption and permanency, the Children's Bureau was working with the National Adoption Center and other corporate and nonprofit partners to launch an innovative national approach to increase adoption opportunities for children in foster care. The next generation of the Bureau's National Adoption Exchange, the AdoptUSKids website, was the first national, online photolisting site to feature photographs and biographies of children in the foster care system. That fall, the Children's Bureau awarded \$22 million over 5 years to the Adoption Exchange Association to maintain the AdoptUSKids website and to support recruitment of adoptive families through these comprehensive activities. In collaboration with the Ad Council, the Adoption Exchange Association produced a series of public service announcements each year encouraging families to consider adoption from foster care.

In 2008, the Children's Bureau Adoption Opportunities program provided discretionary funds to eight grantees to address the diligent recruitment of families for children in the foster care system. Some of the strategies grantees are testing included increasing the number of dually licensed homes, intensive individualized recruitment, involvement of neighborhood partners, and multi-format training for staff and resource families.

Meanwhile, the mid-2000's also saw an expansion of child abuse prevention efforts at the federal level. In 2003, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the first Presidential Proclamation for Child Abuse Prevention Month, OCAN launched the National Child Abuse Prevention Initiative as a year-long effort. The theme of the 14th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect was devoted to prevention, and OCAN and its National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and

Neglect Information partnered with Prevent Child Abuse America and the child abuse prevention community to produce a variety of tools and resources to support national, state, and local public awareness activities. The same year, OCAN released its "Emerging Practices in the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect" report, the product of a 2-year effort to generate new information about effective and innovative prevention programs. OCAN received nominations of programs and initiatives from across the country; these were reviewed and evaluated by an Advisory Group of experts. The report presented outcomes of the nomination process along with a literature review.

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When the U.S. Surgeon General named 2005 the Year of the Healthy Child, there was renewed commitment to making child abuse prevention a national priority. As a result, OCAN focused on making safe children and healthy families a shared responsibility, a theme that also was incorporated into its 15th National Conference. The theme expanded in 2007, when OCAN's resources guide and 16th National Conference encouraged communities to work together to promote healthy families. At the same time, OCAN invited 26 national organizations to be national child abuse prevention partners, so that the message could reach a wider audience.

Support for child abuse prevention efforts expanded, due in part to the growing body of evidence including the Emerging Practices project, suggesting that home visitation programs for pregnant mothers and families with young children can reduce the incidence of maltreatment and improve child and family outcomes. In 2003, the Children's Bureau awarded funds for eight sites nationwide to replicate and evaluate the University of Maryland's Family Connections Neglect Prevention program.

In 2007, the Children's Bureau funded three additional grantees to implement and evaluate nursing home visitation services, and in 2008, it funded 17 cooperative agreements to build the infrastructure to support evidence-based home visiting programs to prevent child abuse and neglect.

President Barack Obama took office in January 2009 amid a growing economic crisis. The Obama Administration has acted quickly with legislation to protect the well-being of children in foster care and ensure the continued operation of critical child welfare programs during this challenging time, including the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which increased funding for the Title IV-E Adoption and Foster Care Assistance programs during the recession.

Other bills reauthorized and enhanced existing child welfare programs, including the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010. In addition to reauthorizing funds for discretionary and State grants at current levels, this law provided for new studies and reports to Congress on topics such as shaken baby syndrome, program collaboration, and effectiveness of citizen review panels. It also supports child welfare systems improvement by encouraging family participation in case planning and placement decisions, and requiring enhanced data reporting by states.

The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act reauthorized Title IV-B programs with particular emphasis and attention to issues such as children's emotional health,

trauma, and the use of psychotropic medications; faster permanency for younger children; standardization of state data reporting; and caseworker visit standards.

The Children's Bureau has continued to support innovation and improvement of child welfare systems through its discretionary grant funds. In 2009, the Bureau funded a new National Resource Center for In-Home Services to support promising practices that can help children remain safely in their homes while their families are at risk. Also in 2009, the Children's Bureau funded the National Resource Center for Tribes to help tribal communities strengthen child welfare systems and services, and to connect tribes with training and resources and with each other.

In keeping with its emphasis on evidence-based practice, the Bureau also held its first Child Welfare Evaluation Summit in May of 2009 to explore the current state and evaluation practice, and promote new approaches for evaluating child welfare systems, projects, and programs. A second summit was held in August, 2011.

The same year, the Bureau sponsored a national meeting in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education to improve educational stability and outcomes for children in foster care by bringing state administrative teams together to develop partnerships with the Department of Education to improve educational stability and outcomes for children in foster care by bringing state administrative teams together to develop action plans. Other recent discretionary grants have funded research and demonstration programs on diligent recruitment of families and children in foster care, the use of family-group decision making, and the integration of trauma-informed practice in child protective services.

In 2010, the Children's Bureau awarded funding to implement the President's Initiative in reducing Long-Term Foster Care, now known as the Permanency Innovations Initiative. The effort seeks to improve outcomes for groups of children who face the greatest barrier to permanency. During the grants' 5-year term, the Bureau will invest \$100 million in individual projects, technical assistance and evaluation to develop knowledge about what works to help children and youth in foster care achieve permanency.

Just last year, on April 9, 2012, the Children's Bureau kicked off a yearlong celebration of its 100th anniversary with a ceremony at the Hubert H. Humphrey Building in Washington, DC. The event included remarks by many distinguished guests, including HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, ACYF Commissioner Bryan Samuels, and Acting Associate Commissioner Joe Bock. Former ACYF Commissioner Carol Wilson Spigner (Carol Williams) received the Children's Bureau Centennial Award for extraordinary vision and leadership in the field of child welfare services.

Celebrating the Past and Imagining the Future was also the theme of the 18th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect to commemorate the Children's Bureau's centennial year with the field. A Children's Bureau Centennial Website also launched, which provides a wide array of resources including an updated Children's Bureau video and an e-brochure.

To sum up: The last 25 years of the Children's Bureau's history has been a period of tremendous change, including a far greater number of laws enacted regarding child protection, foster care,

and adoption than during any other period. These laws and resulting programmatic changes reflect society's increased knowledge and understanding of the plight of struggling children and families, thanks in part to the Bureau's support of groundbreaking research and state data regarding the outcomes experienced by children involved with the child welfare system.

In these and many other ways, today's Children's Bureau is a testament to the pioneering work of all preceding Bureau leaders and staff, whose unwavering dedication to improving the lives of children and families has helped to make our current progress and our visions for an even greater tomorrow a reality. Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: [00:57:11] Thank you, Carl. That was a lot of ground for you to cover in a very short time.

At this time, I am pleased to introduce several members of the Children's Bureau's staff and leadership who will share with you their vision for the future of Children's Bureau's work in several important areas. So at this time I'd like to turn things over to Jane Morgan, the Director of the Division of Child Welfare Capacity Building. Jane?

Jane Morgan: [00:57:35] Thank you, Elizabeth. It's a pleasure to have this opportunity to talk about the Children's Bureau's work related to achieving permanency for children served by child welfare, and to share the CB's vision for the future of our work in this area.

As you've heard, over the past 25 years the child welfare field has recognized the importance of permanency in children's lives, and laws and practices have been put in place to ensure that children don't remain in long-term foster care.

This was a real shift. Research and demonstration projects in the 1960s and 70s focused on the need for permanency and resulted in important legislation such as Public Law 96-272 in 1980 that reconceptualized foster care as a temporary service.

I was a newly minted social worker in 1977, and I remember vividly my very first training and exposure to the concept of permanency for all children, regardless of race, age, disability, or special needs. That training and the new focus at our state was the result of a Children's Bureau grant that implemented the first Special Needs Adoption Project for us.

The Children's Bureau has fought over the past 25 years to support practice that ensures that children are only removed and placed out of home if reasonable efforts to keep them safe in their homes are unsuccessful. And that from the moment a child welfare intervenes with the family, efforts began to return the child home with services and supports to the family that ensures safety, or to find another permanent family if return home isn't possible.

The Bureau's network of training and technical assistance has been funded to work with states to improve their permanency outcomes, and have identified effective strategies for permanency planning. We've also focused on the need to specifically address youth permanency, as too many youth continue to age out of the foster care system without a connection to a meaningful adult relationship.

Along with the PNTA Network, the Bureau has funded a number of demonstration grant programs focused on permanency over the past 25 years. However, it's clear that we have much work left to be done.

In 2001 the Bureau began working with states to implement program improvement plans as a result of the Child and Family Service Reviews. Findings during the first round of CFSRs that impacted achieving timely permanency included among others, failure to search for relatives, particularly paternal relatives; inadequate case assessment; challenges in recruiting foster and adoptive families; court issues; establishing adoption as a case plan goal in a timely manner; long-term foster care being commonly used for youth over age 9; and lack of concurrent planning.

In 2010, with the second round of CFSRs, additional issues, such as the scarcity of appropriate placement resources and a lack of consistency in conducting adoptive home studies or completing adoption-related paperwork were identified as impacting permanency.

Based on AFCAR's data there were more than 400 thousand children in foster care on the last day of 2011. More than 104 thousand of these children were waiting to be adopted, and on average they were 8 years old and had been in foster care for an average of 24 months. 50,500 children and youth were adopted in 2011, but the percentage of children who are placed for adoption dramatically decreases as the child ages. Children who are 9 years old and over account for 42 percent of the population of waiting children, yet they comprise only 26 percent of the adoptions.

These issues in the data point to the need to continue our efforts to support states in addressing permanency needs through the development and implementation of policies and practices that ensure timely placement with a permanent family.

A large number of children and youth ages 9 and older who are awaiting families are ultimately not going to be placed in adoptive homes. This points to the need for the child welfare community to question the strategies and models of current permanency planning programs, new foster and adoptive home study processes, as well as current diligent recruitment efforts.

Although the Adoption Safe Families Act of 1997 authorized the use of concurrent planning, the movement towards forward utilization of this technique has been slow, inconsistent, and at times piecemeal. It's clear that the lack of appropriate placement resources for children and youth impact the achievement of permanency.

There is a need to design and implement models of diligent recruitment for kinship, foster and adoptive families to improve permanency outcomes. Options for permanency should include the early and continued exploration of kin, including both paternal and maternal families, and should include general targeted and child-specific recruitment efforts.

There's also a need to develop and implement post-permanency programs that support families when children are returned home or placed in another permanent family, whether for adoption, guardianship, or with a relative.

While there are model programs, and efforts have been made across the country over these years to improve permanency outcomes, child welfare systems are complex, and it is critical that systems issues be addressed. The Children's Bureau has friended our T&TA Network to provide technical assistance to address systems issues, and the Bureau is continuing to explore ways to support state initiative systems reform efforts. These include building agency capacity; strengthening professional development, including developing leadership skills at all levels of the agency; ensuring consistency of social work practice throughout the agency; developing and implementing continuous quality improvement systems that support good practice; expanding and improving community resources; and building partnerships across agencies so that families, children, and youth are supported.

In closing, these systems issues represent an important area of focus as the Children's Bureau works to the future, and our work with states and tribes to ensure children have permanency in their lives.

Elizabeth: [01:03:46] Thank you, Jane. Our next speaker is Melissa Brodowski; Melissa is Senior Child Welfare Program Specialist with the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect.

Melissa Brodowski: [01:03:56] Thanks, Elizabeth, it's a pleasure to join this group of folks that are on the phone with me from the Children's Bureau. As mentioned previously, I am at the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, and our division focuses specifically on the front end of the child welfare system. And our guiding legislation, as you heard earlier, really falls under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, and through that legislation we have a key role specified to be a focal point for any agency collaboration around issues related to child maltreatment, so we take that charge very seriously in everything we do.

As people might know, CAPTA basically embodies a philosophical approach that emphasizes the most effective way to meet the challenge of preventing and addressing child abuse and neglect. It's for all programs, prevention and treatment programs, public and private, to work together and partnership with families and other disciplines, as in social services, health, mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, education, early childhood, etc., and really to work with the community as well to achieve those common goals for positive outcomes for children and their families.

What I wanted to just share was a little bit of background around the work that we've been doing in this area, and then highlight some of the opportunities and challenges that we're facing, particularly around prevention, and then thinking about moving forward.

We do know -- and you'll probably hear from John as well about the statistics around child maltreatment -- but I think people are familiar around the 681 children that we have found through child maltreatment reports in 2011 to be victimized. But there are other numbers we need to pay attention to around actually the 3.4 million reports that pertain to 6.2 million children who've been reported for suspected child abuse and neglect, and we know that this problem is quite costly.

The CDC has estimated that the cost of society each year for child maltreatment is about \$124 billion. Obviously we have a lot of work cut out for us. And so it's an exciting time as we're

reflecting during the centennial year around our work, and the feature you see on the screen, which was alluded to earlier around the work that we're doing to promote prevention and do partnerships with communities; but I wanted to just share a little bit of a quote that was in an article that staff from the Children's Bureau contributed to the general public child welfare around the Children's Bureau's vision of the future of welfare focusing on the goals of reducing child maltreatment and achieving optimal health and development of children and families through a comprehensive seamless service delivery, collective impact strategies to leverage social change, policy, and finance reform. I think those are all the things we're all trying to do.

The 18th National Conference that was mentioned earlier, and that there are some resources available; and we're planning for the future in terms of the 19th National Conference, just as a little side note.

But if you go to the next slide, this will really show you in terms of how we think about child maltreatment. As we know, it's a complex and multi-dimensional problem. So our efforts within the Children's Bureau have really focused on these multi-level strategies that cut across all levels of the social ecology.

So if we think about strategies at the individual level, really through the work of our community-based child abuse prevention programs that you've heard earlier, providing direct support for prevention programs like home visiting, and parenting programs, and family resource centers. But really also focusing on improving the quality of those programs, and focusing on improving evaluation capacity and engaging parents as partners.

When we look across the other levels of the social ecology around the family and community level interventions, we're really also trying to build the evidence-based attainments as earlier and throughout the presentation around effective programs through our research and demonstration and grant activities.

So I know several of them have already been mentioned earlier, but I will just mention a few others in terms of more recent work that we've been focusing on around funding for rigorous evaluations of existing prevention programs; there's been several initiatives in the last two years around partnerships with other systems, such as early education in child welfare; um, older youth in education; the regional partnerships were mentioned earlier, but then also a new initiative around partnerships with the support of housing for families who are impacted by child welfare.

And all those initiatives really contribute to testing innovations that work with families and communities. And then at the national level, in terms of what we're trying to do to impact the community in societal levels that education and awareness -- you saw the previous slide around the Prevention Resource Guide and our work with our prevention partners, and recently also with our friends the National Research Center and the Center for Study of Social Policy, we're very excited of that partnership that we've had over the years to really help develop and disseminate the material for Child Abuse Prevention Month and throughout the year.

It was also mentioned earlier in terms of the interagency partnerships that we have with the Federal Interagency Workgroup; but then more recently in terms of our partnership with ACF and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau on the new Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood

Home Visiting Program... it belongs to any partnership with SAMHSA around the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare, and definitely some partnerships with the CDC around Knowledge to Action Research Consortia to prevent child maltreatment and other early childhood partners.

If you move to the next slide, Elizabeth, I wanted to just share some of the opportunities and challenges that we've been facing, and I've at the Bureau now for 11 years and just reflecting on the work that we've done in particular over that time period, but I think it also applies to over the years since the late 80s and what we're talking about.

I think the big challenge, the first one about measuring and evaluating the impact of prevention activities is this whole issue of how best to measure something that didn't occur. And obviously we know there's a strong body of research around the risk factors that really was mentioned earlier around the LONGSCAN studies. We know that there is a strong body of literature around those factors.

But I think more recent efforts in the last decade has really focused on expanding how we measure the effectiveness of prevention to include how we look at the strategies that actually promote protective factors, and increasing this capacity in families and communities. And the challenge as we move forward, is trying to develop those kinds of tools that measure, that we need to both measure the risk as well as the protective factors.

The Quality Improvement Center was one initiative that was mentioned earlier that we're really trying to look at how to collaborate interventions that are designed to increase protective factors and decrease risk factors. And core areas of the social ecology really result in this optimum child development and increase family strength.

Promoting protective factors has also been a focus of our Resource Guide, and we're doing work right now on developing an ACYF protective factor framework.

The next bullet is really around this movement that we all are very familiar around -- implementing and sustaining evidence-based and evidence-informed programs. I know for a prevention program over the years we all recognize that we want to promote more efficient use of these dollars by investing in programs that work; but we're also interested in promoting critical thinking and analysis so that people can be more informed funders, consumers, and partners around preventing and addressing child maltreatment.

And then obviously this real focus on continuous quality improvement, and promoting that ongoing evaluation and activity. So we're pleased with the progress that we're making, in that we know that there are more resources and investments in these evidence-informed programs; but we also know the other challenges around sustaining these programs.

And as was mentioned earlier around the family connections and supporting evidence-based home visiting evaluations, really trying to understand more about what it takes to really implement these programs with fidelity, and how to sustain them, and how to really define what we mean about fidelity, what are the elements of that. So trying to understand those aspects of sustaining programs.

And ultimately, what do these programs cost us. And those are the kinds of things that we're trying to work on now.

The other areas that prevention is really trying to work on is embedding these programs and services within larger early childhood and child welfare and other systems in place. I think there's really been strong connections made between early education and child abuse prevention, and especially also around expansion of differential response; really focusing on developmental needs of young children is a priority, but there's also really exciting work under way with the initiatives around differential response, that quality improvements that are under differential response is really looking at that alternative to traditional investigations of accepted reports; and really trying to handle this in a different way that really partners with partners and communities to provide the services that meet their need.

So research is underway to generate knowledge around the implementation and the outcomes and the cost of those programs.

And then definitely in terms of linkages with other systems like home visiting and child abuse prevention. I think the challenge now is making sure those prevention programs are really able to handle and adjust the needs of the families with the greatest risk factors, the highest risk factors related to substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, developmental disabilities and other challenges in middle-type problem families.

There's been lots of efforts particularly to really think about how we integrate parents of partners, and really that commitment to meaningful parent engagement and parent leadership in planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs. That's a longstanding priority, and that it entitled of caps that I know [ph], it's also a priority in many other Children's Bureau programs.

So we're excited to hear about innovations under way across communities to engage parents and communities in meaningful conversations around this work; communities have turned to parent partners, and really hosting parent and community cafes that are organized and facilitated by parent and community leaders who work together to find solutions to their problems.

And really, I think all these efforts have roots in family support, and that whole philosophy around building and empowering families to determine their priorities. But we also know there's much more work to do to make sure that involvement is a meaningful role, and not just a token role.

And then finally, I think as you've heard, too, earlier, we're really committed to the knowledge development dissemination and integration aspect so that our federal investments are really worth the investment, and we've been really working to increase the level of regular over the years in our research and evaluation efforts. But we also feel that dissemination is critical, and we need to share what's worked and what didn't work.

And so it's even more important for us to understand not only what works best for whom, but also what works best given a particular community scene and organizational capacity to implement. And so I think we were all really committed to doing that.

And so moving forward, I would say just to adapt some words that Mr. Church [ph] and all has shared -- we've identified some technical solutions to what we think we need to do to strengthen parenting and community capacity by trading these new evidence-based programs providing support for parents; we know we need to build partnerships among key stakeholders; we know we need to support more service expansion.

But our adaptive challenge really, for the future of our work, is how best to transform communities by really focusing more on prevention and promotion in our investments. And investing, as I mentioned earlier, in the research that's needed to build those tools and measures that we need to have.

The other challenge is really achieving consistent quality and access. Quality matters and implementation matters, but then improving our ability to reach from the prevention side all those at risk, as I mentioned earlier. But then also ensuring that those services are culturally relevant for the diverse ethnic and cultural groups and tribal populations and immigrant populations we're trying to serve.

And then really trying to trade incentives, institutional incentives, for assisting and collaboration. We obviously know that's really critical and important, but how we maintain those linkages across different systems. And then really challenging ourselves to look at outcomes of collaboration. We know it's important, but to what end. What results to we expect to seek. And then really creating that personal context for personal responsibility for child wellbeing, and achieving a good balance between what we see as a formal services system, and then really strengthening informal supports within families and communities.

So I will just wrap up by saying if you go to the next slide, I think it should show a link we've been working to bring together our prevention partners and grantees for a couple of years now in our Network for Action. We have a vision video that's available on that link there, and if you want to learn more, we're really excited about really trying to bring folks together for this shared vision, building stronger connections and engaging in shared action to prevent child maltreatment.

So I guess I will just stop there. Thanks, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: [01:18:59] Sure, thank you, Melissa. Our next speaker is Randi Walters. Randi is a Child Welfare Program Specialist in the Division of Child Welfare. Randi.

Randi Walters: [01:19:10] Thanks, Elizabeth. I'm so pleased to be able to join you to share the CB's vision for the future for the Child Welfare Workforce.

The CB thinks it's a really important conversation to have, because we believe that well conceived policies and innovative program design and even relevant research findings will accomplish very little if people actually working with children and families do not have the personal characteristics, the skills, the knowledge, and the resources that they need to do their jobs with excellence.

The CB is committed to thinking very carefully about how to strengthen the child welfare workforce as a key component to the vision for reducing maltreatment, and contributing to the optimal health and development of children and families.

You've heard a little bit already in the webinar today about where our focus on workforce development has been during the last 25 years; I'm going to spend my time talking a little bit about what we've learned and where we're headed.

Practically from the beginning of being a federal agency, the Children's Bureau has believed that a highly competent workforce is the essential element of child welfare practice, and the key to responding effectively to children and families in need. CB believes that building an effective and efficient workforce is as critical a goal for child welfare agencies as building an array of quality services and interventions. We really believe that the children, youth, and families who come into contact with the child welfare system deserve evidence-informed assistance from a committed and skilled child welfare workforce.

We believe that child welfare workers must be supported by well-functioning, well-managed, and high performing child welfare agencies. And we also believe that there is a causal relationship between a capable child welfare agency workforce and positive case outcome.

This past year, the CB Centennial Year, has given us a rich opportunity to look at our past investments in the workforce. You've heard some of those highlights today. The Children's Bureau owned land and Lynch Thomas did a tremendous amount of research to write and publish an article in the September, 2012 edition of the Journal of Public Child Welfare. It's entitled "100 Years of Children's Bureau Support to the Child Welfare Workforce." It's well worth your read. He does an amazing job walking us back in time to trace the investments of the Bureau.

As you heard today, and as you'll read more in depth if you look at Miranda's article, you will see that most of the CB's past work on supporting states has focused on recruitment, training, and retention of staff in two key areas. One is supporting the development of training curriculum adjusting various aspects of practice; and two, educational incentives through our BSW and MSW programs. So that's true in the past, and it's also true today.

Let me highlight a little bit of what we're currently investing in. In 2008, as a result of knowledge developed and lessons learned through the Retention and Recruitment Grant, the Children's Bureau funded the first National Child Welfare Workforce Institute to build the capacity of the National Child Welfare Workforce through activities focused on supporting the development of skilled child welfare leaders in public and tribal child welfare systems, and in the private agencies contracted by the states to provide case management services.

As Jane mentioned just a few minutes ago, CB invested in the National Child Welfare Workforce because of our belief that developing leaders at every level of the workforce, whether that be student, supervisor, middle manager, or agency director, is an important effort if the child welfare workforce is to be transformed.

We set out some high goals for the Workforce Institute. We asked that they would derive promising practices in workforce development; we asked that they would deliver child welfare

leadership training for middle managers and supervisors; that they would facilitate DSW and MSW traineeships; that they would engage national peer networks, and support strategic dissemination of effective and promising leadership and workforce practices; as well as to advance the knowledge through collaboration and evaluation.

Just at this point in their five-year project, over 450 middle managers have been nominated by their top agency leadership and attended a five-day residential training to develop leadership skills in the service of implementing a specific change in their agency. Over 800 supervisors have benefited from the offering of a 40-hour online training curriculum to develop their leadership skills.

Just in the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute traineeships, which doesn't account for many of the Title IV-E traineeships, 303 students across 12 universities that were selected by the Workforce Institute have been awarded stipends. They are an invaluable resource to the field and best practice in workforce development. I'd encourage you to take a look at their website, there's a lot more highlights we'd like to share with you.

At the same time in 2008 that the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute was funded, the CB also funded five comprehensive workforce projects. Their purpose was to build the capacity of the workforce through targeted workforce development intervention, and traineeships that built on promising workforce practices. These cooperative agreements have provided universities and agencies the opportunity to partner, and specifically to focus on organizational assessments and interventions to improve agency culture and climate. We're proud of the work that they've done.

Learning from our history, taking a look at where we are currently related to our funding is an important piece of developing a vision. The Centennial Year really has provided us the opportunity to look back. But if that so encouraged us, then have the chance to listen closely to the field as we think about what the vision for the future needs to be.

Part of listening intently in order to create a vision for the future of the child welfare workforce has led us back to you, our constituents. States, tribes, agency directors, human resource managers, middle managers, supervisors -- a whole list to ask questions about what you see as the most pressing issues in the field related to finding and keeping excellent people to serve in child welfare.

It's involved looking closely at the evaluation findings from the effective programs we are currently funding, and digging in deeper to what states and tribes are reporting through a number of data sources. And if we had more time, I'd go into a list of what we think are the most pressing issues. I hope as I give the key three items that we're focusing on for the future, you'll know where we see the most pressing issues. And if there's time for questions later, we could get more into that.

As we think about the future and moving forward, the Children's Bureau intends to pursue a multi-pronged approach to building the capacity of the Child Welfare Workforce. First, those who provide frontline services to children and families must be recruited, educated, trained,

supported, and developed professionally in innovative ways. Building the Child Welfare Workforce requires people with excellent skills doing high quality work.

Second, agencies must improve their organizational cultures if they intend to retain their workforce and achieve better outcomes for children and families. The Children's Bureau wishes to support healthy child welfare organizations that value their people, that support best practices in case management, that are able to provide evidence-based treatment and hospitable environments for effective intervention, and that effectively collaborate with partner agencies to ensure that children and families are safe, that they're healing, and that they're thriving.

Third, we really believe that our academic partners need to look in their curriculum at the content knowledge that will teach the wide array of skills needed to prepare high quality professionals, specifically in child welfare. In the academies that train and in the agencies that serve, the desired result is to support the workforce to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of children and families. Achieving safety, permanency, and wellbeing for children requires that child welfare professionals be knowledgeable and skilled, and have access to the necessary resources.

Thanks so much for your time today on that.

Elizabeth: [01:27:58] Thank you very much, Randi. Our final speaker today then will be Joe Bock; Joe is the Acting Associate Commissioner of the Children's Bureau. Joe?

Joe Bock: [01:28:16] Thanks, Elizabeth. I just want to thank everybody on the Bureau who was on the panel and gave some of their thoughts and their insight into where we are today in terms of some of the key areas that we're focusing on, and the path that we're currently on.

I was asked to kind of summarize and sum up where as a whole the Bureau plans to go, and what our vision is for the future. And I really struggled with coming up with an answer, and I think the one that I came up with is actually the most appropriate answer, which is that it's not for me or anybody else in the Bureau to definitively make that decision. It's for us to facilitate a conversation and the discussion and partnership in collaboration with the field in order to make the decision about where we take this program into the next century.

And so to that end, as part of our Centennial Year, we brought together a group of practitioners, researchers, foster youth, former foster youth, parents who were involved with the system, child welfare directors, and federal staff, and we put them in a room and we gave them the charge of coming up with what the Bureau's charge should be for the future in moving the program forward.

They finished their work, and we haven't had the opportunity to actually release their work yet, but I think you won't be surprised at some of the key direction that they suggest that we go. But they're shifting to the frontend support in the system; building a skilled workforce, as Randi already talked about; making ultimate use of data and technology; honoring the tribal voices and other cultures in collaborating across systems.

Again, as I said, I don't think these should come as any surprise to anyone, I don't think it's anything anyone would disagree with; and in fact, it gives me a lot of optimism about the ability and the promise of making some real change going forward in this program.

If you look around at the landscape, many of the states that we recently awarded waivers to are already taking steps in order to implement some of these concepts in their waiver approaches; you also see a lot of conversation about the principles in these concepts from all across the field. So it provides a lot of optimism that actually in our lifetime we're going to see some real change and movement in the child welfare system.

I want to thank everyone who's been involved in this Centennial Year; I especially want to thank ICF for all of their support and everything they've done for making this Centennial Year as important and as meaningful as it's been; and I specifically want to thank everyone who's listening today and in the field who's been involved and participated as part of our centennial, and you will commit to continuing to partner with us and discuss with us where we need to take the future of this program.

Thanks, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: [01:31:16] Sure, thank you, Joe. I do have a message that John Hargrove is on the line to speak. Joe, I know you're a really tough act to follow, but John, are you there? Could you say something so we can see if you're on the air?

John Hargrove: [01:31:27] Yes. Can you hear me?

Elizabeth: [01:31:28] I can. So I know that it is a tough act to follow Joe Bock, but if you wouldn't mind just sharing your thoughts with us for a few minutes about the data team, and then we will go ahead and open up the lines for questions. So for those of you one the phone, John Hargrove with the Office of Data Analysis Research and Evaluation.

John Hargrove: [01:31:48] Thank you, Ms. Mertinko, and I'd like to let folks know it's a real honor to be able to spend this time with you and give you some information and history about data as I see it in the Children's Bureau and my colleagues have seen it.

I began my career in CB in the early 90s, and it was a couple of years after the NCCAN's data collection began and just months prior to the implementation of AFCARS, which was the first year the states began collecting for AFCARS and shortly before the SACWIS dollars became available.

And at this time the widespread use of PCs for child welfare data analysis at the state level was very limited. And in most states a fair amount of IT technology (for the old-timers on the phone) was focused on mainframes and financial management.

In addition, it seemed that at the state level internally, generally speaking a lot of data was simply limited to general descriptive data and basic counts of children and youth in care, and much beyond that was really the domain of researchers in academia.

As mentioned before, the advances in IT has meant significant improvement since states' capability in capturing and analyzing data; and these IT advancements, coupled with NCCANS, AFCARS, SACWIS, and later the data side of CFSR had really served as a catalyst for states using data more and more in understanding their child welfare system.

Generally speaking, once that data basics were enhanced, that is a more widespread use of data via NCCANS, results from SACWIS systems and AFCARS, this enhancement has ultimately assisted in piecing other department and Children's Bureau initiatives -- such as NSCAL [ph], data provisions of ASFA, and clearly the CFSR into the states' bigger child welfare picture, as well as the department's deeper and richer understanding of the national child welfare picture.

The continued improvements in utilizing data for understanding child welfare systems had lead to further improvements in CB's implementation of each round of the CFSR. As mentioned earlier, CB has recently implemented the NYTD Data Collection Initiative, which for the first time results in a fuller coverage and look at the child welfare system. That is, with NCCANS what happens prior to and leading up to foster care; AFCARS was happening during foster care; and with NYTD what happened after foster care.

All of the aforementioned initiatives provide the basis for forging ahead with pragmatic applications of what is being learned about the States Child Welfare System as well as what is happening nationally. For example, these initiatives, if nothing else, indirectly serve to enhance the work of the participants in the CB-sponsored Child Welfare Evaluation Summit, which focused on evidence-based practice.

The Children's Bureau is certainly leading the field of child welfare, state child welfare in the right data direction using the various data initiatives; implementing various legislative programs, each of which broadens the states' understanding of useful data, is in understanding and operating a child welfare system. In the shorter term for example, each effort on the Children's Bureau's part to improve the data side of the CFSR ultimately sets the stage for more CFSR results, which are more applicable and more pragmatic for each state in improving their child welfare system.

One longer term data goal is most certainly that all of these aforementioned initiatives in some way serve as a basis for states developing a long-term capacity for more fully utilizing their own child welfare data internally to make very informed child welfare decisions presently and far into the future.

One of the major challenges for many states is the scarcity of resources, money, and staff. However, if the results of child welfare data analysis becomes richer and more readily available, particularly internal to the states, substantiating the need for more resources can be much easier. I've had more than one state indicate to me that the data results have been very helpful in advocating with their state legislatures in appropriating dollars.

The bigger vision of a more widespread programmatic use of data, particularly at the state level, is quite achievable as more and more data results are implemented, ideally at the worker and administrative level. This implementation will be most fully realized as a team approach between the Children's Bureau, their regional offices, and state staff.

And clearly, while there've been some apparent improvements in the child welfare system, the significant decrease in the general population and when one day counts [unclear], children are staying in care shorter periods of time, and certainly states have been able to sustain more than 50 thousand adoptions every year for the past 8 years, I'd think there's clearly some improvements. However there's a lot more work to be done, and it's certainly our vision that the data will certainly enhance that work in further improvement.

Thank you very much. Thank you, Ms. Mertinko. You're right. Joe was very tough to follow.

Elizabeth: [01:37:39] You're very welcome. (laughs) I knew he would be. So at this time I'd like to go ahead and open our telephone lines up. We do have a few minutes for questions or comments from our audience. I believe it's Star-1 for folks to queue up for questions?

Operator: [01:37:52] Yes. Please press Star-1 and please record your first name and your state. Thank you.

Elizabeth: [01:38:07] So while we have people lining up for questions, I do just want to call your attention to the last slide. You'll see that we've listed here the address for the Children's Bureau Centennial Website. This is where the recordings of the webinars and also the slides are posted. You'll find the three prior historical webinars and also the seven topical webinars that we've conducted in the past year there, as well as this webinar and the recording and the slides from our final webinar, which will be in April and will be on Special Needs.

We also have started a LinkedIn discussion group, and there are instructions on the screen right now for how you can find and join that discussion group, or if you're having any difficulty locating it on LinkedIn you're welcome to email me and I can invite you to join. I would love to see this conversation continue via the LinkedIn discussion group.

And finally, when we conclude the presentation today and you log out of "go to webinar," a webinar survey will appear. And I would ask that you please take a few minutes and share your feedback with us on today's webinar through that survey.

Do we have anyone lined up with questions or comments?

Operator: [01:39:11] Yes, we have a question from Charles; state your state, please.

Charles: [01:39:26] The question relates to the quality of the child welfare staff. After listening to the suggestions that are being made, or to improve it. In 1958 under the Children's Bureau's Helen Jeter study, 49 percent of the public child welfare workers and 51 percent of the private agency workers were MSWs or going into training for MSW. The 2002 RPI Survey, the last that I've read, shows only 12 percent MSWs. How can you really serve children and families with this small proportion of MSWs.

Randi: [01:40:27] I think that that question has been coming up in lots of different groups, Charles, related to the skill level of MSW and BSWs and our expectations that they will be leaders in the field. We could talk about this for a long time, in terms of the skills that are needed to be an excellent practitioner, and I think it does point to some research, more research that's needed about the difference that having an MSW and BSW makes.

One of the pressing concerns that comes up across the country, though, often has to do with filling vacancies, and having enough access to MSWs and BSWs in the workforce. So we simply know that there are not enough MSWs and BSWs to fill the needs of the child welfare workforce, which I think takes us to a conversation about the skills, the knowledge, the abilities that are needed, and if there are other places that we could cultivate those skills, knowledge and abilities at the same time that we really continue to support developing leadership in those MSW and BSW students.

Elizabeth: [01:41:43] Thank you, Randi. Did anyone else on the line have anything that they wanted to add? Do we have another question on the line, or a comment?

Operator: I think we have a couple coming up here, it will be just a moment.

Elizabeth: [01:42:20] Okay, wonderful. Thank you. And since we have a minute, I am going to take this opportunity to give special thanks to our Federal Staff for taking time out of their schedules to prepare some very thoughtful and thought-provoking comments for our discussion today.

I'd particularly like to thank on the CB staff: Jane Morgan, Melissa Brodowski, Randi Walters, John Hargrove, and Joe Bock; and also very much a presence in today's webinar, although she elected not to speak, LaChundra Lindsey, who has been the Federal Project Officer for the Centennial work and was really instrumental in pulling together this group of CB staff to speak today. So I'd like to send thanks out to her as well.

Operator: We have a question from Brenda, your line is open.

Brenda: [01:43:05] I actually am about to finish an MSW program, so I found that last exchange fascinating and confounding. Can you explain to me how it is that there is a dearth of MSWs when-- I just didn't follow the thinking in the response, in Randi's response. I wasn't clear about how a needed level of capacity, of service delivery would be mined in -- and I'm not sure what she meant at all -- other professions? rather than hiring MSWs. I didn't understand. And I'm finishing the degree, and will be looking for professional work. So that's why I'm on the call today. I'm not a member of the Bureau.

Randi: [01:44:05] I appreciate the chance to clarify if I wasn't clear on that. Many states don't require an MSW or a BSW degree in order to work in the child welfare workforce. They do require an MSW or a BSW degree. And you'll notice that our investment in MSW and BSW programs has been really from the beginning of time.

However, in certain states and jurisdictions with really high vacancy rates, what they're telling the Bureau is: we simply don't have enough MSW or BSW applicants to fill the positions that we have open. And so in that case, they are going to other disciplines to fill those.

It could be counseling students, psychology students, criminal justice students, and so it leads to the question: do MSW and BSWs, are they the workers that are doing the highest quality work? Is that who we need? And when we can't get them in certain jurisdictions, how do we train other professionals to have the skills, the values, the knowledge to be really effective in child welfare practice.

So it's not at all to say that we don't-- I mean, we would love to have the best and the brightest from every BSW and MSW program make a commitment to the very complex work of child welfare. But when we're not able to recruit MSW and BSW students, then how do we develop our pool of applicants in other places in order to meet the needs that we have in the workforce.

Did that clear that up?

Brenda: [01:45:36] Yeah, it does. Thank you.

Elizabeth: [01:45:39] Thank you Randi, and thank you Brenda. Do we have other callers on the line?

Operator: Yes. We have a question from Charles, your line is open.

Charles: [01:45:47] I'd like to answer that with a different perspective. It's not a lack of recruiting MSWs, the work environment has changed, so MSWs no longer want to work in child welfare. In the 1950s and 60s, child welfare was the first choice of MSW students. Now it's the last choice, particularly since professional people and child welfare no longer make a critical decision. Lawyers and judges make all the critical decisions in child welfare. Why should an MSW, spending two years of training, simply provide the paperwork for them to make decisions based on knowledge of child development and psychology.

Randi: [01:46:52] Charles, I think I'd respond to that in two ways. I think that the second prong of our multi-pronged approach really is for focus on helping child welfare agencies improve that organizational culture so that it is a place that people with a wide array of skill sets want to stay, where they see themselves as complex skilled practitioners, so it really is something that we're focused on. Both in what we're funding currently through the Workforce Institute and the Comprehensive Workforce Project. Also where we'll focus in the future, related to helping child welfare agencies really look and then intervene in their organizational environment.

Charles: [01:47:40] Well, the future is not very promising right now. The quality MSWs are going into private practice or in the health professions, and not in child welfare unless the environment is changed. There is no reason for child welfare emulating the juvenile justice system in terms of its care of children. It should not be a legal, but a clinical service.

Elizabeth: [01:48:16] I think the discussion is so interesting that maybe somebody is typing it verbatim. So if you're clicking on a keyboard we can hear you, if you could please mute your phone individually, that would be fantastic. And I don't want to cut off an interesting conversation, but I do want to see if we have others on the line with questions or comments just to try to get everybody an opportunity to raise their point.

Operator: We do have a question but they did not record their name. So if you had pressed Star-1 your line is open. Please check your mute button, your line is open. (pause) And there are no further questions.

Elizabeth: [01:49:09] Well then at this time I think we can go ahead and wrap up. I hope that you've enjoyed today's presentation and our entire historical webinar series. If you've missed the first three they are recorded and available on the Children's Bureau Centennial Website, which is

shown. There's also lots of other resources available on the Children's Bureau Centennial Website. So I definitely recommend that you visit that and check out the other resources that are there in addition to the webinar.

The 8th and final webinar in our topical series, entitled "Special Needs and Disabilities: Redefining Populations and Services," will be held in April, and registration information will be available on the website that is shown above. I'd also like to encourage you once more to join our LinkedIn discussion group and continue the conversation that we've started here today. Information on joining this group is shown, and my email address is there as well. So if you have any difficulty accessing the group from your LinkedIn account, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Finally, I'd like to once again thank our Children's Bureau speakers for just giving us this wonderful insight into their vision for the future. I'd also like to thank Carl Rochelle, who covered an enormous amount of territory in a very short time today, for his contribution to both today's discussion and our prior two webinars. And at this time, this concludes our webinar.

Please be sure to complete the webinar survey that will appear on your screen as you log out of GoToWebinar. Thank you.

[End webinar.]