

Ramsey County Citizen Review Panel/Child Services Review Committee

Monday, July 27, 2026

Attendance: Ankit Sood, Hibak Roble, Mynea Yah, Huda Yusuf, Giffy Crabbe, Beth Salzl, Rachel Weis, Kat Ruth-Leigh, Casey Acord, Bob Whitehead, Tonya Long, and Melissa DeBilzan.

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Meeting notes:

- **Panel Review of Child Protection Screening Cases:** Mynea led a group discussion with panel members including Kat, Ankit, Tanya, Beth, Hibak, Bob, Casey, Melissa, and others, focusing on their review of 30 child protection cases, highlighting challenges, surprises, and the decision-making process in screening for child safety.
 - **Range of Maltreatment Types:** Ankit and Kat noted the wide spectrum of maltreatment in the cases, from environmental neglect to physical and sexual abuse, and discussed the difficulty in applying screening guidelines to such diverse situations.
 - **Screening Guidelines Application:** Panelists described the challenge of matching case details to screening guidelines, with Ankit explaining the process of cross-referencing case descriptions with specific guideline sections to determine screen-in or screen-out decisions.
 - **Mismatch in Panel and County Decisions:** Several members, including Tanya and Ankit, observed a significant mismatch between their screening decisions and those made by the county, particularly regarding the high number of screen-outs and the reliance on sufficient information from reporters.
 - **Emotional Impact and Safety Assessment:** Kat and Tanya discussed the emotional difficulty of assessing child safety without direct knowledge of the families, emphasizing the high stakes and the subjective nature of defining safety, especially in cases involving sexual abuse.
 - **Role of Reporter Information:** Tanya raised concerns about the lack of information on reporters, suggesting that knowing more about their relationship to the family and prior actions could improve screening accuracy and context.
- **Clarification of Screening Decisions and Law Enforcement Involvement:** Mynea, Laura, and Beth clarified the process for screening out cases, especially those involving sexual abuse by non-caregivers, explaining that such cases are cross-reported to law enforcement and sometimes lack follow-up information for the panel.
 - **Sexual Abuse Screening Criteria:** Melissa and Tanya questioned whether all sexual abuse allegations should be screened in, with Laura and Mynea explaining that only cases involving caregivers or household members are screened in, while others are referred to law enforcement.

- **Law Enforcement Follow-Up:** Beth asked about follow-up on cases referred to law enforcement, and Mynea explained that feedback is inconsistent, with smaller departments sometimes providing updates but larger ones rarely doing so.
- **Panel's Role in Reviewing Law Enforcement Outcomes:** Kat suggested that the panel could consider reviewing law enforcement outcomes to assess whether children are kept safe, noting this as a potential area for future exploration.
- **Factors Considered in Screening Decisions:** Panelists, including Kat, Tanya, Hibak, and Ankit, discussed the importance of child safety, family strengths, prior history, and cultural context in making screening decisions, and explored the role of alternative support services like PSOP.
 - **Child Safety and Family Strengths:** Panelists emphasized child safety as a primary concern, but also considered family strengths and prior history, with Kat highlighting the value of support services in preventing escalation to investigations.
 - **PSOP Service Limitations:** Tanya explained that PSOP often contacts families after a screen-out to offer services, but most parents decline, raising questions about the effectiveness and perception of these supports.
 - **Cultural and Community Factors:** Mynea described efforts to match workers with families' cultural backgrounds to improve engagement, and Kat and Hibak discussed the need for community involvement and alternative supports beyond county services.
 - **Bias and Prior History:** Ankit raised concerns about how prior history is weighted in screening decisions and how workers are trained to avoid bias, with Mynea explaining the use of past information to inform current assessments.
- **Recommendations and Questions for Improving Screening Process:** Panelists, led by Kat, Ankit, Tanya, and Beth, discussed potential recommendations for improving child protection screening, including community involvement, better reporter information, and further review of guidelines, but concluded that more questions and learning are needed before making formal recommendations.
 - **Community Member Involvement:** Tanya advocated for including community elders from diverse backgrounds in screening teams to provide cultural insight and support, especially in complex or uncertain cases.
 - **Reporter Information Enhancement:** Panelists suggested collecting more information about reporters, such as their relationship to the family and prior actions taken, to improve context and reduce false or biased reports.
 - **Guideline Review and Legislative Context:** Ankit and Laura discussed the need to review and possibly revise screening guidelines, noting that legislative changes and county norms affect how cases are assessed and that guidelines may contain loopholes.

- **Further Case Review and Data Analysis:** Panelists proposed conducting another round of case reviews, focusing on screened-out cases, and analyzing patterns such as repeat reports and zip code distribution to inform future recommendations.
- **Panel Reflections on Personal Experience and Bias:** Panel members, including Tanya, Kat, Hibak, and Mynea, reflected on how their personal experiences and backgrounds influenced their interpretation of cases, highlighting the impact of trauma, cultural norms, and the challenge of maintaining objectivity.
 - **Influence of Trauma and Experience:** Tanya and Kat described how their experiences with child protection and trauma shaped their views, particularly regarding sexual abuse and the high bar for intervention.
 - **Cultural and Medical Context:** Hibak shared how their medical history and cultural background affected their understanding of cases, especially those involving school absences and misunderstandings about family circumstances.
- **Data Analysis and Patterns in Screening Decisions:** Ankit presented a data analysis of the panel's screening decisions compared to county outcomes, revealing substantial variation, a tendency for panelists to screen in more cases, and differences by race and reporter type, with Laura suggesting further analysis of repeat reports and zip code patterns.
 - **Variation in Panel Decisions:** Ankit showed that panelists had significant variation in screening and assessment decisions, with a majority tending to screen in cases compared to the county's lower screen-in rate.
 - **Race and Reporter Type Analysis:** The data revealed differences in outcomes by race and reporter type, with certain categories having no screen-ins and others showing higher screen-out rates.
 - **Repeat Reports and Zip Code Patterns:** Laura suggested analyzing how many screened-out cases had subsequent reports and examining zip code data to identify areas with higher report volumes and potential service needs.
- **Planning for Future Panel Activities and Retreat:** Laura, Kat, and Mynea discussed plans for an upcoming retreat, future meetings, and the timeline for finalizing the panel's report, including the use of surveys and Microsoft Forms to collect feedback and case reviews.
 - **Retreat Agenda and Feedback Collection:** Laura and Gifty Crabbe coordinated the collection of feedback via surveys and discussed the need for an agenda for the retreat, with plans to review screened-out cases and gather additional input from panelists.
 - **Timeline for Report and Meetings:** Kat reminded the group of the timeline, noting four remaining meetings before the report is finalized in January, and outlined the plan to learn about screening and recommend changes this year, with implementation support next year.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Retreat Agenda Preparation:** Compile and review suggestions from the transcript to finalize the retreat agenda, including geographic analysis and cultural responsiveness training topics. (Laura, Ankit, Tklong50, Mynea)
- **ZIP Code Data Sharing:** Send the colored map and ZIP code data for Ramsey County to Laura for distribution to the group. (Tklong50)
- **Screened Out Case Review:** Prepare and distribute 30 screened out reports for panel review in the next round, using a Microsoft Form for documentation. (Mynea)
- **Survey Feedback Collection:** Send out the QR code and survey link to all participants for feedback on the meeting experience to Ramsey County. (Laura)
- **Data Analysis Sharing:** Improve and share the screening decision data analysis and summary with the group, including additional perspectives if suggested. (Ankit)
- **Additional Feedback Solicitation:** Send discussion questions to participants to collect any further thoughts or answers that arise after the meeting. (Gifty Crabbe)