



The Children’s Advocacy Center™ Multi-disciplinary Team Enhancement Program (MEP)

MEP Enrollment
48 of CACTX’s 69 children’s advocacy centers opted to participate in the initial launch of this voluntary program for FY16.
Enrollment included an application process that involved submission of a work plan and an executed Memorandum of Understanding demonstrating the support and willingness to participate by CAC Partner Agencies, including Child Protective Services, Law Enforcement and Prosecution.
The 48 CACs that were approved to participate in the program were awarded increased state funding allocations to assist with costs associated with ensuring one or more dedicated staff positions whose focus would be on strengthening the MDT and facilitating more effective coordination and collaboration among team members.
The remaining 21 Texas CACs have been invited to join the initiative for FY17 and CACTX is currently providing intensive support and technical assistance to those programs as they explore this opportunity. Letters of Intent, indicating a CAC’s commitment to enroll, are due at the end of March 2016.

MEP DFPS Statewide Intake Report Dissemination
CACs receiving, reviewing and making referrals based on Statewide Intake (SWI) Reports distributed directly to them from the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is an integral tool of the MEP.
All 48 of the CACs enrolled in MEP in FY16 are now receiving SWI Reports simultaneously with their law enforcement partner agencies (within whose jurisdiction the alleged abuse and/or neglect occurred).
Participating CACs were urged to start slowly when implementing the SWI report component of MEP to ensure effective outcomes, as well as the ability to address staff capacity concerns for both the CACs and partner agencies.
At this time, 276 law enforcement agencies are participating (allowing their CACs to receive duplicate SWI reports). This represents 30% of the total number of law enforcement agencies currently partnering with all 69 Texas CACs.
Thirteen participating CACs opted to expand the number of law enforcement agencies for which they would be receiving SWI reports in January 2016. This expansion effort added 70 law enforcement agencies (bringing the total to 276). The next opportunity for law enforcement expansion will be July 2016. It is anticipated that a significant expansion will occur at that time.

MEP Preliminary Outcomes
CACs have established and are supporting new staff positions* dedicated specifically to assessing and addressing issues and factors impacting the Multidisciplinary Team's ability to effectively communicate, coordinate and collaborate.
CACs have reviewed over 30,000 SWI notifications in the first quarter of FY16.
CACs are reporting, anecdotally, that caseloads have increased since implementing MEP – without any expansion of criteria for cases that are to be brought to the CAC and worked through the MDT (meaning cases that were previously slipping through the cracks are now getting the critical attention they need). Many of these increases appear to be child physical abuse cases. <i>Statistical reporting by CACs to CACTX is expected to begin reflecting these increases in the 3rd quarterly report for FY16.</i>
CACs are responding to the increased caseloads by expanding direct service staff positions.*
Opportunities for improved quality control for DFPS Statewide Intake operations have arisen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPS Statewide Intake has been able to identify and address issues precluding timely delivery of SWI reports to some law enforcement agencies as a result of the feedback CACs are now able to provide. • Plans are now underway to automate the identification of correct law enforcement agencies and delivery of SWI reports to those agencies in part as a result of the MEP initiative.
CACs are reporting improved team interaction, collaboration, and team work.
CACs report that MEP implementation has helped to uncover and address previously unidentified confusion related to protocols, expectations, and accountability among the MDT.
CACs are reporting better attendance and participation at MDT case review meetings.

*MEP Preliminary Staff Expansion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48 CACs participating. • 38 CACs creating 48 NEW staff positions dedicated to the MEP. • More than 40 new direct service staff positions created, including Forensic Interviewers, Family Advocates, and Mental Health Professionals.

MEP Trainings
Four regional day-long MEP Orientation Sessions were provided during the months of September and October 2015. 136 individual CAC staff members from all 48 participating CACs attended these trainings, including 36 CAC Executive Directors.
Two Strengthening Multidisciplinary Teams two-day trainings were offered in January and February 2016 with attendance over 40 CAC Multidisciplinary Team Coordinators/Facilitators.

MEP Technical Assistance
CACTX has been providing ongoing support, technical assistance and resource materials to CACs involved in MEP, including policy and protocol guidelines, sample documents, and templates.
Networking Forums for MDT Coordinators and other CAC staff members integrally involved in MEP are planned for Spring/Summer 2016. These gatherings are intended for key staff to learn from one another, share ideas and information, and expand potential strategies for strengthening MDTs throughout Texas.