RCT Evaluations of Differential Response

CREATING DATA RESOURCES

13th NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE DATA & TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE
JULY 20, 2010
Introduction

TODAY’S SPEAKERS:
• Brett Brown, WRMA
• Kathy Chase, Colorado
• William Wolfe, Womazetta Jones, Tamara Fuller, Illinois
• Tony Loman, IAR
Topics for Today

- Overview of Differential Response
- QIC-DR and the Multi-Site Evaluation
- Modifying SACWIS for DR and Evaluation
  - Colorado
  - Illinois
- Lessons Learned from Completed DR Evaluations
Overview of Differential Response and the QIC-DR

BRETT BROWN
DIRECTOR OF EVALUATION,
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CENTER-DR

WALTER R. MCDONALD & ASSOCIATES, INC.
What is Differential Response (DR)?

Emerging Consensus on Core Characteristics
- A system including both Investigation Response (IR) and one or more Alternative Responses (AR) for screened-in cases
- Clear criteria for AR eligibility (generally safety related)
- Maltreatment not substantiated for AR cases
- AR families may refuse services following safety assessment if no over-riding safety concerns are found
- Reassignment of AR cases to IR when safety dictates
What is DR? (continued)

- A Practice Change
- A Culture Change
- A Data Collection Challenge
Purpose of QIC-DR Project

- Improve child welfare outcomes by implementing DR, and build cutting edge, innovative, and replicable knowledge about DR.

- Enhance capacity at local level to improve outcomes for children and families identified for suspected abuse or neglect.

- Provide guidance on best practices in DR.
QIC-DR: A Partnership

American Humane Association
Walter R. McDonald & Associates, Inc.
Institute of Applied Research
National Conference of State Legislatures
American Bar Association
A Larger Partnership

QIC-DR

- Project Staff
- National Advisory Committee
- Academic Scholars Panel
- Doctoral Students
- Children’s Bureau
- R&D Sites

July 20, 2010
Highlights of Year I Activities

- Literature review
- Online State survey and report
- Interviews and focus groups
- Information summits and listening sessions
- CFSR/PIP analysis
- Legal issue brief and legislative analysis
Summary of Key Findings to Date

- 18 of the 40 surveyed States currently have or were implementing DR
- Only 2 RCT evaluations of DR (MN, OH)
- Differences in implementation:
  - Eligibility criteria
  - Service content
  - Data Collection Capacity
  - Scope
  - State/County Control
Evaluation Methodology

- Randomized Control Trial (RCT)
- Multisite Approach
  - Three coordinated, high quality evaluations
  - Sharing common measures, instruments
  - Data not combined
Evaluation Sites

- Ohio
  - 6-county consortium (Champaign, Clark, Madison, Montgomery, Richland, Summit)
  - DR already implemented in other Ohio counties, and in Clark County
- Colorado
  - 5-county consortium (Arapahoe, Fremont, Garfield, Jefferson, Larimer)
  - Urban and rural counties included
- Illinois
  - Statewide
  - Unionized Workforce
  - Major emphasis on AR training
  - Private workers delivering most services
  - State run system
Experimental Design for Evaluation

New Screened In Reports

Pathways Assignment

Does not meet criteria for AR

Investigation

Random Assignment

Meets criteria for AR

Alternative Response (AR)

Outputs
- Initial Child Safety Outcomes
- Initial Family Satisfaction and Engagement Outcomes
- Intermediate Child and Family Safety Outcomes
- Intermediate Cost Outcomes
- Intermediate Agency Outcomes

Investigation Response (IR)

Outputs
- Initial Child Safety Outcomes
- Initial Family Satisfaction and Engagement Outcomes
- Intermediate Child and Family Safety Outcomes
- Intermediate Cost Outcomes
- Intermediate Agency Outcomes

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Evaluation Data Sources

- CPS Administrative Data (SACWIS)
  - Modifications for DR
  - Data Quality and Content
- Supplemental Case Reports
- Family Exit Survey
- Caseworker Survey
- Site Visits
Contact and Resource Information

Project Web Site: www.differentialresponseqic.org

- **Project Contacts**
  - Lisa Merkel-Holguin
    American Humane Association
    LMMerkel-Holguin@americanhumane.org
  - Brett Brown
    Walter R. McDonald & Associates, Inc.
    BBrown@wrma.org

- **Other Sources of Technical Assistance on Differential Response**
  - National Resource Center for Child Protective Services
    www.nrccps.org
KATHY CHASE
SACWIS MANAGER, COLORADO TRAILS

Colorado Consortium on Differential Response (CCDR)
Differential Response in Colorado offers two tracks; Family Assessment Response (FAR) and Investigation Response (IR).

Colorado is a State Supervised/County Administered system. 64 Counties statewide; Five (5) counties are participating in CCDR.

CCDR is set to begin pilot around September 1, 2010 with full implementation in the 5 counties on November 1, 2010.

Colorado Trails is our SACWIS System.
• The Process

  ○ Ensure that your technical team understands the concept of FAR so that the system is modified to support, not just accommodate, the FAR effort

  ○ Inclusive Design – Include Caseworkers, Supervisors, Policy folks as well as the Data/Evaluation folks.
Modifying Colorado Trails to Support FAR activities

The Process (continued)

- Provide boundaries to preserve data system standards but keep an open mind to allow creativity
- **Remember**—Your Data Evaluation Team does not necessarily know/understand what may be needed in order to successfully implement functionality to collect the data
**Project Benefits to using this Process**

- If the functionality supports the FAR effort, implementation should be easier because it will be familiar
- Users are more likely to use the system and therefore critical data for evaluation is captured
- Resulting changes should result in workload efficiencies allowing more time to work with families.
• **Long Term Benefits to using this Process**
  - Careful planning and development of FAR practice/functionality will hopefully carry over to CW practice even if FAR doesn’t continue.
  - Data staff, grant evaluators and program staff working together ultimately develops strong and lasting partnerships.
  - Process continues to take the ‘mystery’ out of software development and data collection when users are actively involved.
Colorado FAR Referral Process Flow

New Trails Referral → Track Assignment → Mandatory Investigation – Not FAR Eligible → Follows traditional Trails Assessment process

FAR Eligible → Randomizer

FAR Eligible – FAR Track
Follows new Trails FAR Modified Referral/Case process

FAR Eligible – Investigation Track
Follows traditional Trails Assessment process
Current Trails Functionality for Abuse/Neglect Allegations

- Colorado’s SACWIS system includes 3 levels of functionality: Referral (Intake), Assessment (Investigation) and Case
- In order to provide services to families, Trails requires workers to complete Referral and Assessment and then open a case.
- Current process too cumbersome for FAR. Also wanted to stay away from the stigma associated with families being involved in a Child Welfare case.
What we changed in Trails to Support FAR

- Functionality modified so workers could go directly from Referral to Case without having to complete the requirements at Assessment level e.g. findings, victim/perpetrator information, etc.
- Functionality was designed simultaneously while Colorado FAR practice was being defined.
- FAR functionality is only accessible to users in the 5 counties participating in CCDR.
• FAR Cases are clearly identified as such. They are not traditional CW cases.
• Functionality also has flexibility to handle changes if the FAR track is found not to be appropriate for a family.
• Functionality will include a feature so families previously randomized will be identified so that they are not ‘re-randomized’ back into the study.
FAR Case Flow process in Trails

1. New Trails Referral
2. Complete all Trails Referral processes
3. Referral Accept window
4. New Track Assignment window to identify FAR Eligible – FAR Track
5. Open a FAR
6. Close FAR
7. Family Successful?
   - Y: Work the FAR
   - N: New Track Change window to re-track back to Assessment
8. CW Case Connection completed
   - Y: Open a CW Case?
   - N: Close Assessment-no further action required
9. Assessment completed
10. Must complete all Trails Assessment requirements including A/N Allegations and Findings

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FAR Track Assignment is completed from the Trails Referral Acceptance window

- Button doesn’t enable unless referral is accepted for ‘assessment’
- Window is required to be completed for all Child Abuse/Neglect Allegation referrals (Program Area 5).
CCDR Track has 2 options: FAR Track and Investigation Track. Far track ‘skips’ the Assessment level; Investigation Track goes on to the Assessment level. This is to accommodate the Randomizer process.

Referral ID is displayed so counties may ‘cut and paste’ into the Randomizer.

Randomizer button is a short cut to the web page so counties can access from Trails.
• FAR Track change allows worker to take the referral back up to Assessment level (investigation) if additional information warrants this change.
FAR Track Change Window

- If a Track Change is needed, caseworkers must state the reason for the change.
- Track Change may only occur within 30 days from of the referral open date.
FAR Framework Window

- Functionality allows caseworkers to document what is currently going on with the family.
- Multiple Framework documents can be added per case.
- Framework is available for use throughout entire CCDR (FAR and IR).
• Functionality allows caseworkers to document services being provided to the family.

• Multiple Service Plans can be added per case.
FAR Support Plan Window

- Allows caseworkers to document the plan (safety) that is in place with the family when they close the case.
- Multiple Service Plan documents can be added per case.
Survey Efforts for the FAR Evaluation

- 3 follow up surveys planned; 1 for the family, 2 for caseworkers
  - **Family Survey**
    - To prepare for the family survey, address edit checks are included in FAR functionality to verify family address information prior to case closure.
    - Families selected to complete the survey will have it mailed to them along with an incentive to complete it.
    - A report will be generated from Trails when a study case is closed so the Evaluation Team knows to send the case exit surveys to families and caseworkers.
Survey Efforts (continued)

- Caseworker Surveys
  - Two Surveys:
    - One is for all caseworkers about background, attitudes and perceptions of CCDR;
    - One is specific to the assigned caseworker regarding a particular case and family
  - Caseworker surveys will be emailed to them directly. This effort will be coordinated by the Data Evaluation group for CCDR.
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Implementing Differential Response in Illinois: SACWIS and Evaluation Considerations

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TAMARA FULLER, PH.D.
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Illinois IT Structure

- Not full SACWIS as payment is not integrated
- Three components
  - SACWIS-Case Management
  - CYCIS-Case Tracking
  - MARS-Payment
Technical Issues

- Quirks of Cases
- Opening a distinctive DR case type in SACWIS
Quirks of Cases

- Investigations can be opened and closed in SACWIS
- Cases can be opened in SACWIS but must be closed through CYCIS
- CYCIS and SACWIS cases are “trued up” each night
- CYCIS case is needed to pay private agencies doing DR
SACWIS distinguishes between
- Investigations
- Cases

Legal requirements and best practices are built into SACWIS for each type

Had to create a new case type for DR incorporating new law and rules
Management Issues

- Implementation in phases
- Staffing and resources
Phases

- Phase 1 was designed to adapt existing systems to provide support
  - Some actions occur manually
  - Some rules not incorporated
- Phase 2 will move toward a more complete system
- Ongoing refinements will be needed as best practices change
Staffing and Resources

- DR team for Phase 1 had as many as 17 people working on it at one time
- Phase 1 took 6 months
- Tremendous advantage was IT people who had been social workers in the field
- Phase 1 costs were roughly $340,000
- Phase 2 has a smaller team with costs not yet determined
Evaluation Issues

- Creating a random control group
- Incorporating data collection into SACWIS
- Collaborative approach facilitated by weekly meetings with DR Project Director, IT Director, and Lead Evaluator
Illinois DCFS Pathways to Strengthening and Supporting Families

- Report of alleged abuse/neglect to 24 hour hotline
  - Initial Screening for CPS
    - HOTLINE WORKERS
  - Screened Families: meet state and local criteria
    - Random Assignment
      - ELECTRONIC DECISION
      - Experimental Group (non-investigation)
      - Control Group (investigation)
      - Special DCFS Unit + Private Agency
      - Traditional Investigators

- Eligibility for Investigation or Family Assessment Path
  - HOTLINE WORKERS
  - Mandatory Investigation
  - Eligible for Family Assessment
  - Traditional Investigators
Forming a Random Control Group

- No change from current intake practice
- Calls come in to State Central Register (SCR) and information is collected from reporters by call-takers
- Allegations are classified as DR eligible or DR ineligible (mandatory investigation)
- At the county level, DR eligible cases randomly assigned to experimental group (DR) or control group (Investigation)
- Random assignment occurs within SACWIS through random number generator (no additional human input)
Issues with random assignment

- County-level randomization versus state-level
- Supervisory “override” – necessity or necessary evil?
Integrating data collection and SACWIS

- Illinois DR evaluation relying heavily on SACWIS data
- Where SACWIS is insufficient, must supplement with additional data
- Case-specific data collection instrument
Contact Information

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Tamara Fuller  t-fuller@illinois.edu
IAR SEGMENT
Evaluating DR in Four State Systems

- Missouri, Minnesota, Ohio and Nevada
- Monthly uploads of SACWIS data for all intakes and cases in the pilot counties
- Historical data was included in the first extraction
- Different methods were used
  - Missouri: 9-track tapes with files in SAS transport format
  - Minnesota: upload to SFTP site, files converted from Oracle to dbf
  - Ohio: upload to SFTP site, Oracle DMP files, imported to Oracle and converted
  - Nevada: (same as Ohio)
Content of Data Extractions

- Pathway/Track Assignment (Missouri and Minnesota)
- Reports/investigations/family assessments (all states)
- Person tables and associated sub-tables (all states)
- Family relationship tables (all states)
- Tables re formal case opening (all states)
- Services and service costs (Missouri only)
- Placement and out-of-home care tables (all states)
- Family contact records (Minnesota and Ohio)
- Worker records (Minnesota and Nevada)
- Risk/Safety/Family Needs Assessments (Minnesota)
- Random Assignment (Minnesota)
Conversion to a Research Database

- Large set of conversion programs created
- We have used FoxPro databases because
  - Sophisticated ad hoc and permanent programs can be written
  - Direct command window manipulation of data via xBASE language and SQL
  - Large scale tables can be maintained, indexed and copied quickly (up to 2GB and 2 million records)
  - No other database system with same flexibility
- Able to create tables of combined fields from different SACWIS tables
Examples of Analyses: Ohio Children and Adults in Reports

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<th>Number of Children*</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Three</td>
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<td>12.2%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Adults*</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Total</th>
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### Examples of Analyses: Missouri Before-After Changes in Levels of CA/N Reports

#### Missouri

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<td>Changes in Levels of CA/N Reports</td>
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<td>13th National Child Welfare Data &amp; Technology Conference</td>
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#### Missouri Before-After Changes in Levels of CA/N Reports

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<th>Location</th>
<th>Basic Needs</th>
<th>Supervision/Care</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Basic Needs</th>
<th>Supervision/Care</th>
<th>Education</th>
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**Comparison**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Basic Needs</th>
<th>Supervision/Care</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Basic Needs</th>
<th>Supervision/Care</th>
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* Basic Needs = Children lack basic necessities, Supervision/Care = Lack of supervision or proper care, Education = Lack of proper concern for education.

# Negative values indicate reduction in recidivism and are shown in **yellow**.

* No cases in these categories.
Examples of Analyses: Missouri Levels of Assignment to Family Assessments

Family Assessment    Investigation

Missouri Counties

WASHINGTON  TEXAS  ST. LOUIS COUNTY  ST. LOUIS CITY  ST. CHARLES  PULASKI  PHELPS  NEWTON  MARIES  JEFFERSON  JASPER  DADE  CEDAR  CALLAWAY  BOONE  BARTON

Percent Less Severe Physical Abuse Screened as Family Assessment or Investigation

July 20, 2010
Examples of Analyses: Minnesota Case Openings

1. Over twice as many experimental families had a case-management workgroup opened (the condition for provided paid services)
Examples of Analyses: Minnesota Flow Chart of Experimental/Control Risk Levels

Families Appropriate for Alternative Response

Random Assignment

Alternative Response
Experimental Families

SDM Family Risk Assessment

Low/Moderate Risk
2433

High/Intensive Risk
427

Traditional Response
Control Families

Low/Moderate Risk
1006

High/Intensive Risk
299

Post-Assessment Services

No
Yes

1618 (66.5%)
815 (33.5%)

206 (48.2%)
221 (51.7%)

299 (17%)

Over 17% of Families Screened as Appropriate for AR were later assessed as high to intensive risk
Examples of Analyses: Minnesota Parallel Analysis of Risk and Report Recurrence in Minneapolis

Post-Assessment Services by Risk Level of Family

Post-Assessment Services by Risk Level of Family

Days to a New Child Maltreatment Report

The higher the line the better the survival

Control

Experimental

July 20, 2010

13th National Child Welfare Data & Technology Conference
Examples of Analyses: Ohio Child Placement, Proportional Hazards Analysis

Survival Function for patterns 1 - 2

- Experimental
- Control

Days until a child is removed or placed

Cum Survival

Group
Experimental
Control