

Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board

CBI Subcommittee

Virtual Meeting

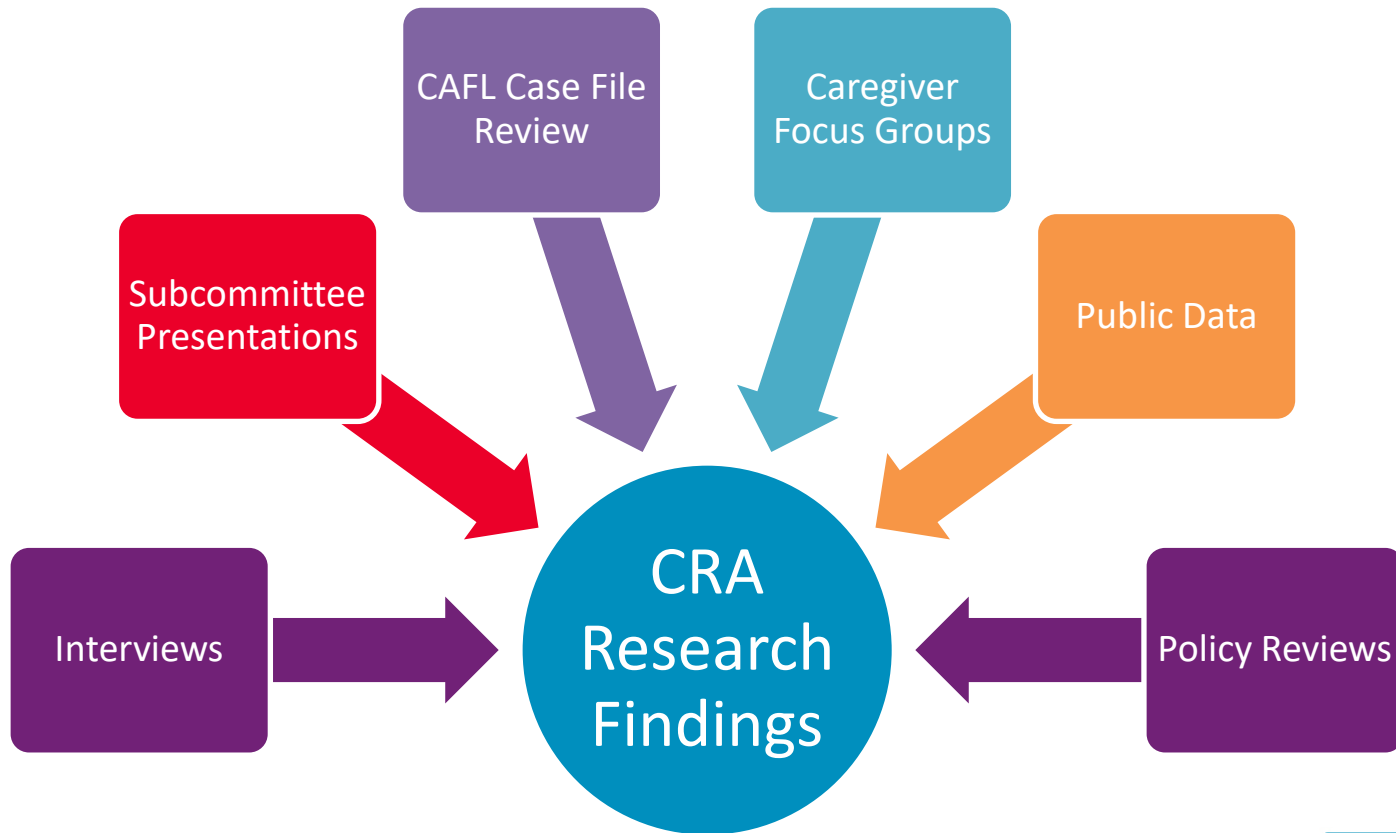
June 16, 2022

1:00-2:30pm

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Review/Approval of May meeting minutes
3. Learning Lab Updates
4. CRA Findings Discussion
5. CRA Recommendations Discussion (Pt. 1)

What informs the draft report findings?



Draft Findings

1. The goals of the 2012 reforms to the CHINS system have only been partially realized
2. There is no shared understanding of what the current CRA system is for, leading to misinformation at every level
3. The system operates with significant differences in different parts of the state
4. There are disparities in how the CRA system is used and who is referred to it
5. Many youth in the CRA system *could* have their needs better met outside of the CRA system
6. The CRA process can be a helpful “fail safe” for families, particularly for youth with complex needs that require multiple agency involvement
7. There is limited data on outcomes from the CRA system that could be used to evaluate the system

1. The goals of the 2012 reforms to the CHINS system have only been partially realized

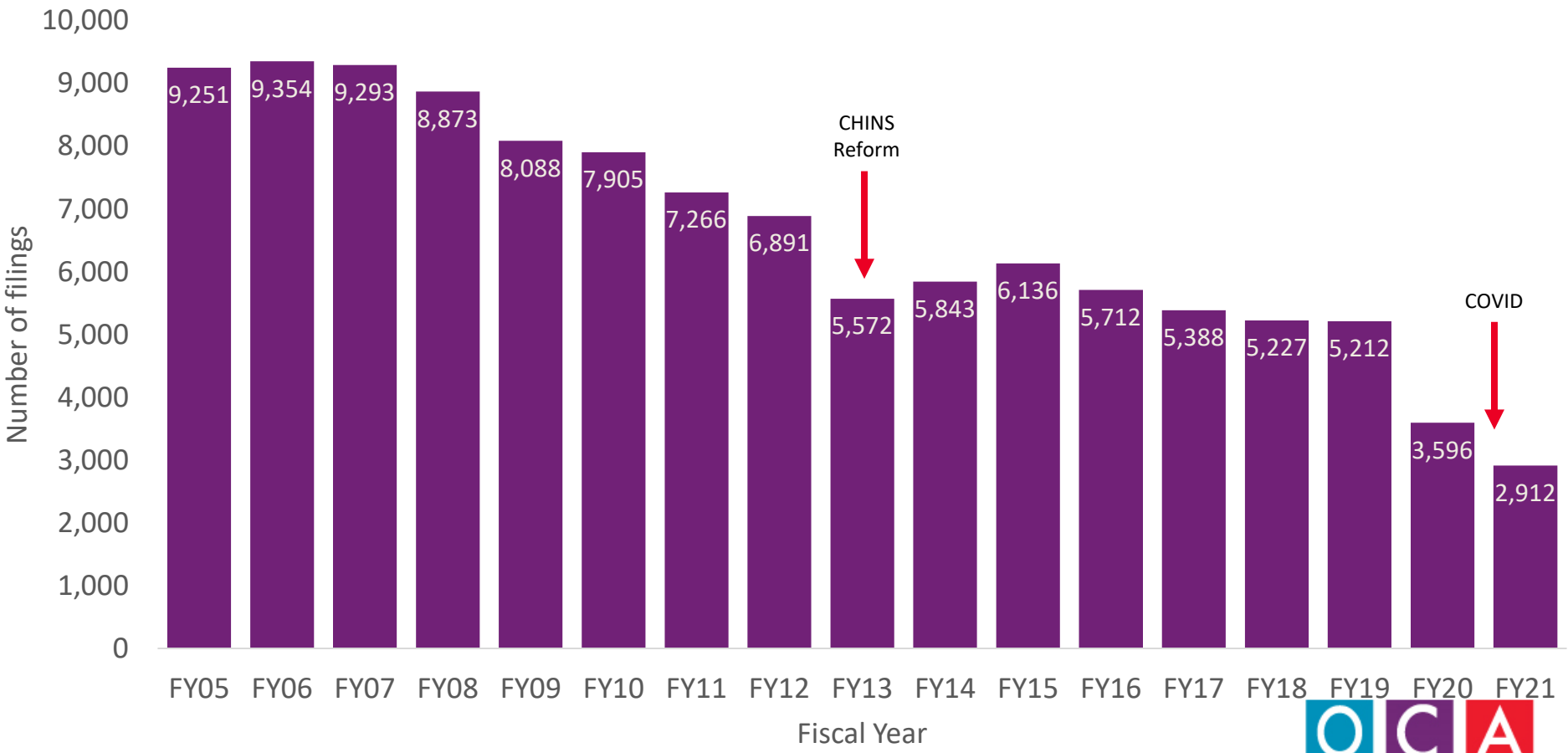
Limit Juvenile
Court
involvement

Reduce harm
for youth

Increase
supports for
youth

CRA filings decreased just 6% between FY13 and FY19

CRA Filings by FY



The reforms reduced some harmful impacts of the CRA process, but not all



- May not be confined in shackles or similar restraints
- Shall not be placed in a lock up
- CRAs do not appear on CORIs
- Set timelines for the CRA court process
- Provided rights to children and families

- In some cases, the reforms introduced *more* court involvement, which can have negative consequences (e.g., preliminary hearings, length of CRA cases & refiling)
- Caregivers reported the process adversely affected their and their child's lives
- Professionals noted the child-centered approach to the CRA makes it difficult to solve family problems or concern
- Research indicates that congregate care placements are associated with negative consequences

The reforms increased community-based supports, but did not address CRA system supports



- Created Family Resource Centers (FRC)

- **Stakeholder Interviews & Subcommittee Presentations:** Stakeholders report inadequate support in obtaining services for youth with CRAs and explained Juvenile Court does not have the authority to mandate specific supports or any “special access” to services
- **Case File Review:** In most CRA cases, there is a mismatch between what services are needed to address underlying behavior/root causes* and what is provided through the CRA Process *as identified by a CAFL social worker
- **Focus Groups:** None of the caregivers reported that their original concerns regarding their child’s behavior were addressed by the CRA process

2. There is no shared understanding of what the current CRA system is for, leading to misinformation at every level

- **Stakeholder Interviews & Subcommittee Presentations:**
 - No common understanding of what CRA process could/should accomplish
 - Many heard from other professionals the belief that the CRA process provides access to specific services, which is not the case
- **Case file review:** Respondents stated services/interventions were not necessary in a subset of the cases reviewed
- **Focus group:** Caregivers reported being told, for a variety of reasons, to file CRAs from therapists, schools and other professionals and cited confusion on what the CRA process entails

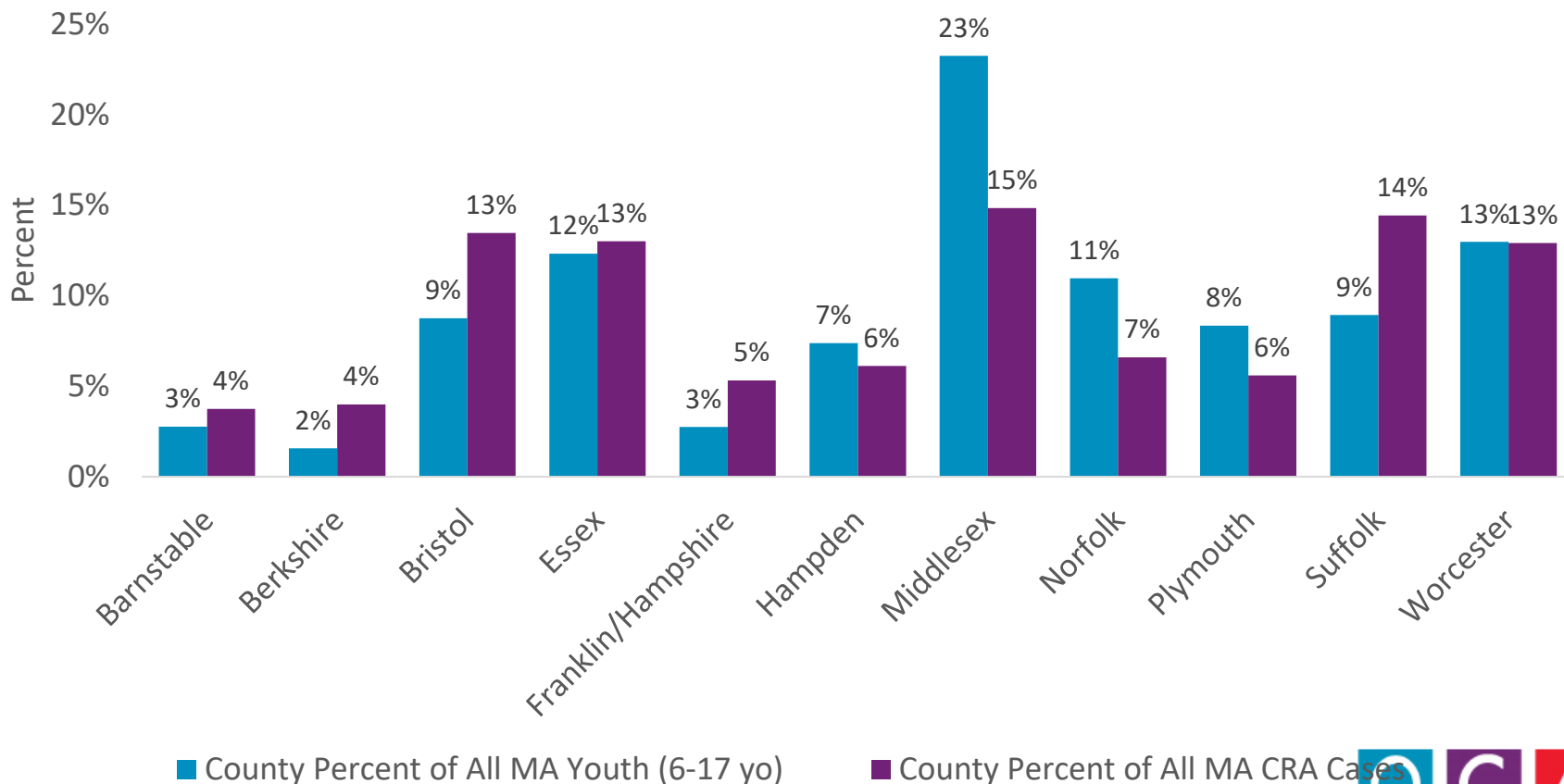
3. The system operates with significant differences in different parts of the state

Court county
disparities

Pre-filing
intervention
measures

Some court counties use the CRA process at higher rates than others

CRA Filings by County Population (FY21)



Pre- and post- filing practices vary

- **Stakeholder Interviews & Subcommittee Presentations:** Professionals detailed different practices depending on court, DCF area office, CAFL area office, Probation office, FRC location, DMH office, school district and county
- **Case file review:** Respondents noted a discrepancies in what supports youth received based on service availability in their area as well as local agency (mainly schools, DCF, DMH) practices
- **Focus group:** Most caregivers were not told about the FRC in their area before filing a CRA

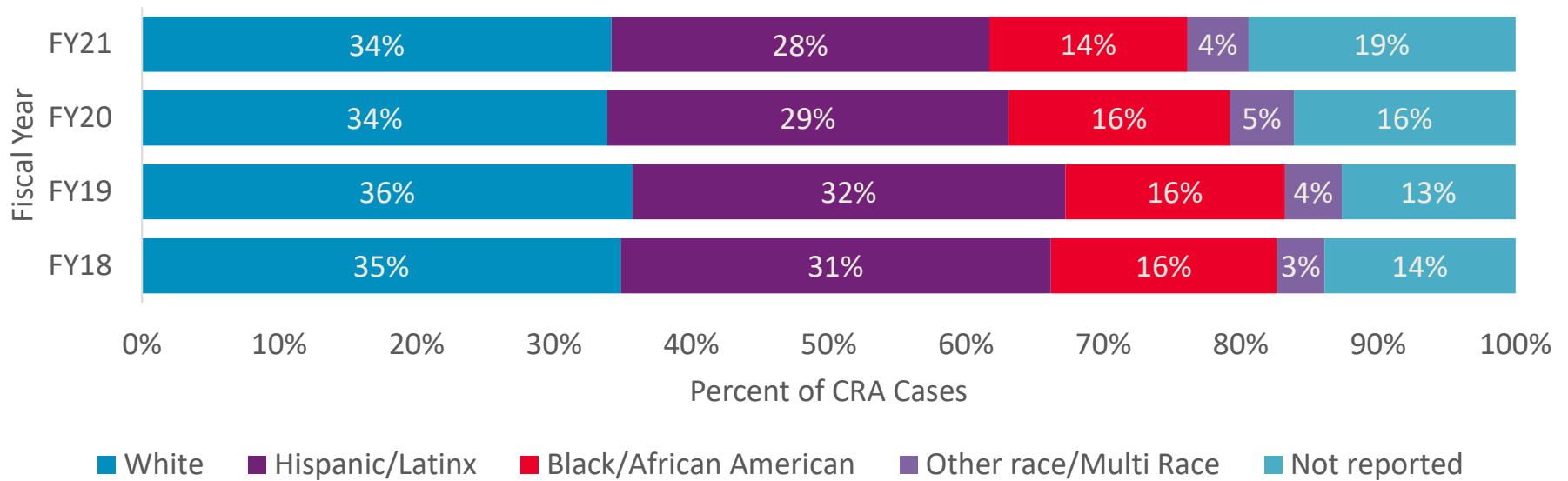
4. There are disparities in how the CRA system is used and who is referred to it

Racial and
ethnic
disparities

Certain groups
of youth of
concern

Black youth and Latino youth are overrepresented

CRA Filings by Race (FY18-FY21)



Race/ethnicity	RoD (MA Pop)	RRI (White Youth)
White	0.54	n/a
Hispanic/ Latino	1.45	2.67
Black/ African American	1.44	2.66
Other race/ Multi Race	0.55	1.02

Youth of color and other groups of youth may be treated differently

- **Stakeholder Interviews & Subcommittee Presentations:**
 - Professionals were concerned about racial and ethnic disparities impacting the youth they worked with and noted inadequate translation services for families throughout the CRA process.
 - Practitioners were concerned that youth with specific needs are processed through CRA system rather than having their needs met elsewhere (e.g., immigrant youth, LGBTQ+ youth, girls, adopted youth, youth with learning disabilities)
- **Case file review:** Latino youth were more likely to have their case extend beyond a year
- **Caregiver focus groups:** Caregivers noted disparate treatment due to their child's race/ethnicity

5. Many youth in the CRA system *could* have their needs better met outside of the CRA system

Barriers to obtaining services push families toward CRA system

However, the CRA process does not provide special or quick access to services

Barriers to obtaining services push families toward CRA system

- **Stakeholder Interviews & Subcommittee Presentations:**
 - Many professionals expressed frustration regarding client eligibility for services as well as barriers like bureaucratic delays, waitlists, and payment issues.
 - Most stakeholders mentioned that families face barriers to obtaining appropriate interventions *regardless* of whether the youth had a CRA petition.
- **Case file review:** Reasons for discrepancies in what youth needed vs. what they received included waitlists, child/family refusal, and lack of agency involvement (e.g., schools not providing services, DCF not engaging in services) or other barriers (e.g., homeless, difficulties obtaining proper documentation for services)
- **Caregiver focus group:** Caregivers mentioned difficulties in accessing services on their own

The CRA process does not provide special or quick access to services

- **Stakeholder Interviews & Subcommittee Presentations:**
 - Most stakeholders mentioned that families often come to court desperate for services or needing immediate interventions
 - However, the process for getting connected to services through the CRA process is slow (due to nature of court process)
 - Courts do not have “special” access to services
- **Case file review:**
 - For most of the cases reviewed, there was a discrepancy between the services/interventions the youth needed and what supports they were provided through the CRA process
 - Many cases lasted more than a year
- **Caregiver focus group:** Caregivers described the CRA process as “dragging on” and did not think the Juvenile Court was necessary to obtain the supports they were looking for

6. The CRA process can be a helpful “fail safe” for families, particularly for youth with complex needs that require multiple agency involvement

A subset of youth in the CRA system have complex needs and/or are involved with multiple state agencies

For these cases, the CRA process can help bring stakeholders together to solve challenges

The CRA process can promote collaboration for complex cases

- **Stakeholder Interviews & Subcommittee Presentations:**
 - Interviewees noted that many CRA cases are complex and require multiple agencies/providers at the table to resolve challenges
 - Three of the most frequently cited benefits of CRA system:
 - Provides a potential venue for case conferencing
 - Connection with a caring adult who can act as case manager/advocate to move things forward
 - Access to counsel as a means for educational advocacy for youth
- **Case file review:**
 - Data suggests youth with CRAs have multiple categories of needs that would benefit from cross-agency collaboration
 - Alternative/therapeutic school placements and IEP/504 plans were identified as a particular need in many of the cases
- **Caregiver focus group:** Some noted that DCF and DMH would not coordinate to transfer services from one to the other, resulting in a gap in care

7. There is limited data on outcomes from the CRA system that could be used to evaluate the system

Example questions we cannot answer:

1. What steps were taken before a CRA petition was filed? Was it truly used as a “last resort?”
2. Was the party who filed CRA petition (e.g., family, school) satisfied with the result of the CRA process? Did it help address the issues that brought them to the court?
3. What impact does the CRA process have on later life outcomes, such as likelihood of involvement with delinquency/ criminal case later in life, or impact on educational outcomes?

What are your thoughts on these seven findings?



1. Do you agree with all seven?
2. Do you disagree with any?
3. Are we forgetting any?

Next Meeting Date

July 21, 2022
1:00pm-2:30pm
Virtual Meeting

For virtual meeting information, email Morgan Byrnes at Morgan.Byrnes@mass.gov

*2022 CBI Subcommittee meetings are on the
3rd Thursday of the month 1:00pm-2:30pm.*

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