



Guardian Monitoring Program Workgroup Meeting

Tuesday, June 14, 2022

Zoom Meeting

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Ms. Sujatha Jagadeesh Branch
Ms. Jacalyn Brudvik
Ms. Julie Higuera
Ms. Ana (Forston) Kemmerer
Mr. David Lord
Ms. Audrey Pitigliano
Judge Nancy Retsinas
Ms. Jane Severin
Mr. Daniel Smerken
Ms. Tracie Thompson

Staff

Ms. Amber Collins
Ms. Heather Lucas
Ms. Alexis Pullen
Ms. Nichola Russell

Members Not Present

Ms. Arielle Finney

Guests – No guests invited/admitted

1. Meeting Called to Order

Ms. Amber Collins called the June 14, 2022 Guardian Monitoring Program (GMP) Workgroup meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

2. Welcome

Ms. Collins welcomed all present and spoke about the meeting agenda. She stated Ms. Heather Lucas sent Workgroup members GMP documents that were recently updated (GMP Overview, Project Implementation Plan (PIP), Situational Analysis (SA), SA Snapshot, and the Regional Map). She added documents will be emailed by Ms. Lucas whenever there are updates. Ms. Collins stated GMP staff value input, edits, comments, and concerns via email or phone from GMP Workgroup members about these documents.

3. Recap & Updates

a. Travel to Clark Counties

Ms. Alexis Pullen stated GMP staff met with Clark County staff on May 23, 2022 and conducted the SA to understand their workflow and process. She stated the visit further reinforced the idea that everyone does things differently and there are different processes.

Ms. Pullen stated Clark County guardianship staff have a temporary employee that keeps track of things that come in. She stated they have different groups that work with them and other counties they work with. She added their relationship with the county clerk's office was something she hadn't considered before, as they have guardianship duties. She added GMP staff got insight into that relationship, which helped refine the SA's questions and led to the creation of the SA Snapshot, which is a shorter format to send to counties ahead of time. Ms. Pullen stated the SA Snapshot is sent before a county visit and county staff are asked to think about the questions.

Ms. Pullen stated there are about five or six people who are funneling guardianship questions or answering phones. She stated GMP staff hope preparation helps the GMP better prepare for county visits going forward.

Ms. Pullen focused on the visit's specific purpose to GMP Volunteer Operations (VO), stating VO staff is looking at how to fit concepts and roles, looking at adapting processes, and asking counties and courts to adapt to the GMP. She stated the GMP doesn't want 39 versions of one role. Ms. Pullen stated GMP staff is looking at how to make this work without having the core application in place.

Ms. Pullen opened the floor to questions. Mr. Daniel Smerken stated he found it amusing GMP staff had discovered the clerk's office and court administration are two entities. Ms. Pullen replied not exactly, stating that it was learning curve for GMP staff, as we hadn't thought about how the court clerk's personality plays a role in implementing the GMP.

Ms. Nichola Russell stated she and Ms. Pullen have a steep learning curve and will have to consider the internal politics of courts. Mr. Smerken stated he was surprised to learn this as well, adding it's something encountered in smaller jurisdictions more so than large ones. Ms. Pullen stated she's learned more about government in the last couple of months than ever before.

Ms. Pullen stated she and Ms. Russell are figuring out what the volunteer roles look like and what their duties are depending on need. She stated all moving parts factor into how staff works and the responsibilities they have. Ms. Collins stated the GMP is learning and adapts quickly, and it's been challenging and fun. She stated it's been rewarding to see everyone's skillsets as we move through the program.

b. Counties Chosen for Pilot Program

Ms. Collins stated the GMP has chosen to implement in Clark County and Pacific & Wahkiakum Counties. She stated the GMP wanted to start small to maintain flexibility in refining any areas that need restructuring. She added by starting small and building momentum, the GMP expects to maintain the timeframe to roll out in other counties next year.

Mr. David Lord asked if there is a set of questions GMP staff developed or a standardized set of questions when monitoring in counties, and what specific things were GMP staff looking for or asking. Ms. Collins replied that Ms. Lucas sent the Workgroup the SA and those are the questions GMP staff asks to help with monitoring and tracking. Mr. Lord asked if he looks back at emails would he see them. Ms. Collins replied yes, but if he still needs the SA, it can be re-sent.

Mr. Lord asked if there is a schedule for visits. Ms. Collins asked if Mr. Lord meant visits to the adult subject to guardianship. Mr. Lord clarified he meant visits to different counties. Ms. Collins replied there is no schedule, but GMP staff don't anticipate travelling until we're ready to present on a larger scale. She asked Mr. Lord if he was suggesting otherwise. Mr. Lord replied no, he was just trying to get as clear a picture as possible.

c. Updates on GTMS

Ms. Lucas stated GMP staff has been working with Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) IT staff on developing a Guardian Tracking Monitoring System (GTMS). She stated there were a few standing IT meetings cancelled this year. GMP staff met IT on May 10th and were dismayed to learn after initial meetings in December 2021 and January 2022, no further progress had been made. She stated IT staff was waiting on GMP staff to give direction, and GMP staff was unaware.

Ms. Lucas stated GMP staff is taking a different approach to the process: checking in once a week to every two weeks, sending clarifying emails about what GMP staff want a system to do, and sending flowcharts and other info GMP staff creates or thinks is important.

Ms. Lucas stated IT staff state they'll be able to achieve the basics of a GTMS in the original timeline given, with a prototype in September 2022. She added the GTMS basic functions will include search and tracking functions.

Ms. Lucas stated GMP staff is looking into outside vendors to see what possibilities exist in building and maintaining a GTMS, and are open to hearing if Workgroup members have suggestions for vendors. She stated GMP staff will continue to update the GMP Workgroup on progress or if there's a change in vendors.

Judge Nancy Retsinas asked if Pacific & Wahkiakum Counties were joined administratively. Ms. Collins replied yes.

Mr. Smerken stated the GMP has a somewhat unique challenge: in the [statute](#) the GMP is going to have more access to court records than other guardianship portions, adding he doesn't think investigators have the same level of access. He added some counties work outside of Odyssey and wondered how to integrate info from those databases. Ms. Lucas stated there have been discussions about receiving data feeds, and IT stated there may be manual data entry in counties that don't use Odyssey. Ms. Russell stated some counties may need to manual input.

Ms. Audrey Pitigliano asked if the system will have dates and notices. Ms. Collins replied yes trigger dates will be included. She added the GMP is working diligently to get the ball rolling

and looking to outsource as well, adding if GMP Workgroup members have vendors they've worked with, the GMP is open to other options.

4. Discussion Topics

a. Workgroup Membership Agreements: Re-evaluation Period

Ms. Collins stated although GMP Workgroup membership terms don't expire until October 2022, GMP staff wanted to address when annual membership is evaluated. She added the GMP values participation, values input, and is looking for members from local and state agencies. She stated in October, GMP Workgroup members will be asked to complete an application, and if selected will receive an email. She stated the GMP is not looking to do this until the end of September 2022 and reiterated the GMP will reevaluate everyone's agreement.

b: Open Forum: Questions to the GMP

Ms. Collins stated she appreciated Mr. Lord asking for clarity earlier, and thought this was an appropriate time in the discussion for clarifying questions to the GMP about where we're at and what we're doing. She added the GMP is creating a GMP newsletter to send to counties, Workgroup members, and the public. She stated transparency is important.

Ms. Pitigliano asked where the GMP newsletter will go. Ms. Collins replied GMP staff plan on sending to as many people as possible, including local state agencies and counties. Ms. Pitigliano was wondering about guardians specifically. Ms. Collins stated the GMP plans to send it to everyone.

Ms. Jane Severin suggested the GMP utilize the listservs AOC has, as attorneys represent guardians as well. Ms. Collins stated AOC has a lot of listservs and the GMP will send the newsletter to the appropriate groups.

Ms. Severin stated there were significant efforts at Tyler Technologies to put together a case management system (CMS) with the Odyssey roll-out. She stated it was huge and stated GMP staff working with AOC IT won't be as huge, but pretty significant.

Ms. Collins stated the GMP is open to all options and are not restricted to in-house IT. She added she knows building a system is challenging and the GMP discussed with upper management going to a third-party to look at programs that were cost-efficient and in the timeframe. She stated the GMP needs to get this ball rolling and boots on the ground as this is a deliverable people have needed and expressed interest in. Ms. Collins stated the GMP is working hard to have the GTMS available, even for the pilot counties.

Ms. Severin stated it was interesting to hear Ms. Pullen speak about the distinct separation between court admin and the clerk's office. She stated it will be interesting to hear about that dynamic in Clark County and Pacific & Wahkiakum Counties.

Mr. Smerken stated the other value with software besides monitoring is that statewide we're not able to tell how many guardianships there are. He added the GTMS is one way to track guardianships in lieu of less restrictive alternatives which may be hard to extrapolate, and we might see numbers change to figure out what works in guardianship.

Ms. Julie Higuera asked about the counties the GMP visited where Odyssey is used, and were they using it as a tracking system. Ms. Collins replied counties weren't really using Odyssey for tracking, but they were using Excel. She stated they were attempting to use Odyssey to extrapolate info and data. Ms. Higuera replied that was what Benton & Franklin Counties were doing. Ms. Collins agreed and added seeing how Benton & Franklin staff worked within this system gives GMP staff info for other counties. Ms. Higuera stated her staff can run Odyssey reports that don't give accurate numbers for active cases, that they don't know if a person is deceased or moved, and that's hard. Ms. Collins replied Ms. Higuera isn't the only person who's said that, and commented that it's a guesstimate.

Mr. Smerken liked the idea of the GMP getting info from one system, getting an idea of what's happening around the state, getting an idea about where resources are needed, and how the [UGA](#) is working.

Ms. Pullen stated the GTMS is at the heart of the VO: staff can test out roles and want to develop a system that fills a number of roles and functions. She added Odyssey is not user friendly. She stated she's tried to figure out how to pull reports and has no doubt it's not used consistently. Ms. Pullen stated a person the GMP spoke to in Clark County knew how to pull some info, but it depended on how cases were coded. She stated no one seems to know how to truly use Odyssey, but they know it's a challenge.

Ms. Pitigliano stated she heard the term CMS and stated the DDA (Developmental Disabilities Administration) has a CARE system and she could reach out to them. Mr. Smerken stated the CARE system was developed 30 years ago, and the state found in the 1990's paper tools weren't effective in gathering data. He added he doesn't think it's comparable to a report system. Ms. Pitigliano stated she thought the CARE system was revamped. Ms. Pullen confirmed and stated it was revamped in the last year, adding the algorithm was changed, but it was specific to Long-Term Care and HCS (Home & Community Services) use.

Ms. Severin stated she thought about the court admin and clerk's office relationship and suggested meeting with clerk's office to get buy-in. She referred to data entry, stating the San Juan County clerk tries hard to educate each of her clerks, and they have many options to code different documents. Ms. Severin added it's very hard to tailor a report that pulls all data based on data input, and she's tried to work with flags for important dates. Ms. Severin stated a CMS is used for documenting hearings and documents, but we want activities prior to those hearings. She stated getting the clerks to come to the table and discuss data entry might be an idea. Ms. Collins stated she was open to the idea.

Mr. Lord stated he wanted to talk about what Mr. Smerken said regarding the number of guardianships in Washington State. He added he used to work with the Legislature and it used to bug them that you can't get that info. He stated in the long-term, the GMP should try to keep legislators apprised of that. He added it isn't too early to let them think about a work session with the GMP so the GMP can say "here's where we are, what we've done, here's what's interesting." Mr. Lord added it's needed to have legislators as champions. Ms. Collins stated GMP staff have talked about that and the need to present on that scale, and added it's something we'll get started on.

Ms. Sujatha Branch stated she hasn't done legislative advocacy due to program restrictions, but this info is important. She stated Northwest Justice Project (NWJP) works across the state and sees disparities. She added it's helpful to see info about guardianships changing, the numbers overall, what's going on locally and in a jurisdiction.

Ms. Collins thanked Mr. Lord and Ms. Branch for their input and stated that even though the GMP is in early stages of development, we want to be confident in what we're doing and presenting to these groups. Ms. Pullen added part of GMP baseline data is there is no current baseline data, and these disparities are part of what made her want to join the GMP.

5. Questions to the Workgroup

a. As we move into implementation, how does your role assist in the process?

Ms. Russell stated the GMP is moving into implementation with four people having boots on the ground, moving from concepts to build things and shift how we're operating. She asked the Workgroup how do you see your role, and how do you see yourselves involved in the implementation process as GMP staff are building this program. She also stated it's an open question asking if Workgroup members have ideas on how they see themselves engaged as GMP staff is building out.

Mr. Smerken asked a clarifying question, if Ms. Russell was referring to Workgroup member's roles as committee members. Ms. Russell confirmed and stated their role is currently advisory and asked if they see it changing. Mr. Smerken replied he doesn't see it changing, he sees individuals bringing expertise, representing the public, and providing feedback. He added each Workgroup member may have info the four GMP staff don't have. Ms. Russell stated external voices are important and necessary to help GMP staff build out, and she can see that with the questions and feedback received today. Ms. Collins stated GMP staff is open to adding missing representatives regarding backgrounds.

Mr. Lord stated being a liaison to those who aren't on the advisory group is vital. He stated as the GMP develops, that could be an important advisory task Workgroup members take on. He added if Workgroup members see or hear things they think are important, they need to bring that to the Workgroup. Ms. Russell agreed stating Workgroup members are bringing insights and an understanding of the community and stakeholders who help shape guardianship. She added taking info about the GMP back to the community and helping spread the word is also important.

Ms. Pullen stated spreading the word about the GMP is the impetus for the newsletter because GMP staff know it'll be a while before disseminating the program on large scale, so word of mouth and keeping people in the loop is needed. She added if any Workgroup member wants to write an article for the newsletter to let GMP staff know.

b. What would you like to see in the newsletter? Contribution?

Ms. Russell stated GMP staff is working on the main components of the newsletter. She added each time it's sent out, it'll have a format that includes progress reports, sharing challenges and successes, resources and info for folks. She stated the newsletter will also have information about the pilot group.

Ms. Russell asked the Workgroup if they were to receive a newsletter from the GMP, what would they like to see and what would get them to open it with excitement and to read through. Ms. Pitigliano stated initially it would be great to know who you are, where you're located, and the overall plan. She added what was already mentioned is great, but putting faces in the newsletter is good, and add the locations where the GMP has gone. She suggested providing a place for guardians to give feedback or a place to share ideas that came from feedback. Ms. Russell stated that was a great idea, creating a section about what the GMP is, that we're hearing from people, and letting people know we're hearing and listening to feedback.

Mr. Lord stated newsletters can be a lot of work, specifically trying to wrangle people into writing articles. He stated that's a challenge and there needs to be staff who are going to do that.

Mr. Smerken stated he thinks all of us have short attention spans, and we're not going to read anything lengthy. He added he agrees with Ms. Pitigliano about the basics, stating the first three newsletters might be that the GMP exists: hammer home this program exists as most folks don't know it exists.

Mr. Smerken stated every time he reads the UGA he comes back with something new, and asked if the UGA requires monitoring. Ms. Collins stated the UGA mentions a GMP, but doesn't have language requiring a GMP.

Ms. Jacalyn Brudvik stated she wonders about not making the GMP overly broad in a newsletter. She stated as a court official she'd want to know details, but as a guardian she might not appreciate a GMP progress report or need to know about the UGA. Ms. Brudvik stated she just went through her triannual renewal and there was a lot more involved. She stated the GMP should think through who to focus on as the GMP might have different appeal to different people.

Ms. Brudvik stated she wondered where funding would come from regarding a newsletter. She stated there are approximately 20,000-30,000 guardianships in Washington State. Ms. Russell clarified the newsletter would not be a paper version, but would be on the GMP website and emailed. Ms. Brudvik stated a lot of people may not be in a situation to review the newsletter unless they go to a library. Ms. Russell agreed and stated the GMP will have to work with resources we have, and will have to build out to reach audiences.

Ms. Collins stated she appreciated the feedback and discussion, and looks forward to feedback and discussion in the future.

6. Wrap Up/Adjourn

The next Guardian Monitoring Program Workgroup meeting will take place via Zoom Conference on Tuesday, July 12, 2022, at 8:00 a.m. With no other business to discuss, the June 14, 2022 meeting was adjourned at 8:57a.m.