

Key Elements of a Differential Response Approach

The Hawaii Experience

John Walters
Theresa Costello
December 8, 2010

The Beginning 2003 CFSR - Hawaii Results

- The CFSR onsite review found we did not meet the standard in 6 of the 7 outcome areas and 5 out of the 7 systemic factors
- Hawaii was required to develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan

Child Welfare Services Branch Priorities

- Ensure child safety by a timely response to all reports of child abuse and neglect accepted for investigation by CWS
- Conduct ongoing safety, risk and needs assessments on all children and families in cases active with CWS

Child Welfare Services Branch Priorities (cont.)

- Ensure that every family and every child, as appropriate, are actively involved in developing their case plan
- Ensure that every child in our care, every family and every foster family are visited at least once a month by the assigned caseworker and afforded the opportunity of a face-to-face interview in cases active with CWS

Front End Strategies

- Prioritize intake referrals to comply with the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)
- Improve training, procedures, and tools
- Increase sustainable resources

Key CWS Strategies to Address PIP Barriers

- Decrease caseloads for CWS workers by development and implementation of a differential response system.
- Fund PIP strategies through the appropriate use of federal block grants and entitlements (SSBG, TANF, Medicaid) to ensure an ongoing and dependable funding stream for services to children and families.
- A stable funding stream avoids the service cut-backs which have occurred in the past when state funds have been reduced.
- Develop and nurture a full service array that provides appropriate alternatives to CWS intervention.
- Increase the level of services to ensure that children and families have timely and appropriate access to services.

CAPTA

“...establishment of a triage system that-

- A. accepts, screens, and assesses reports received to determine which such reports require an intensive intervention and which require voluntary referral to another agency, program, or project;
- B. provides, either directly or through referral, a variety of community-linked services to assist families in preventing child abuse and neglect; and
- C. provides further investigation and intensive intervention where the child's safety is in jeopardy.
(Section 105(2) amended June 25, 2003)

Differential Response

Differential response is an intake process that assesses each report to Child Welfare Services to determine the most appropriate, most effective, and least intrusive response that can be provided by CWS or our community partners to a report of child abuse or neglect.

Goals of Hawaii's Differential Response System

- Safer children
- Stronger families
- More relevant and responsive services
- Greater stability for children
- Shared responsibility between the community and CWS
- Assisting families to realize their full potential and become the solution to their own problems

Safety versus Risk

The cornerstone of the Differential Response System is an assessment by CWS whether a report or case situation presents a safety or risk concern. If a case presents a safety concern, CWS will always conduct an investigation and take action to protect the child. If the report presents a risk concern, families will be offered voluntary services with a community provider.

Safety

- The Intake Safety Assessment reviews 17 safety factors including but not limited to:
 - Family conditions that present substantial and imminent harm to the child
 - The child's safety is currently compromised or is likely to be so in the very near future
 - Concrete evidence of severe negative effects on the child
 - Family situations and behaviors that are out of control and must be prevented or managed to ensure the safety of the child

Risk

Risk is the likelihood of future child abuse or neglect.

Risk factors are child, caretaker, and family characteristics which have been determined, through research and practice experience, to increase the likelihood of future maltreatment.

Risk (continued)

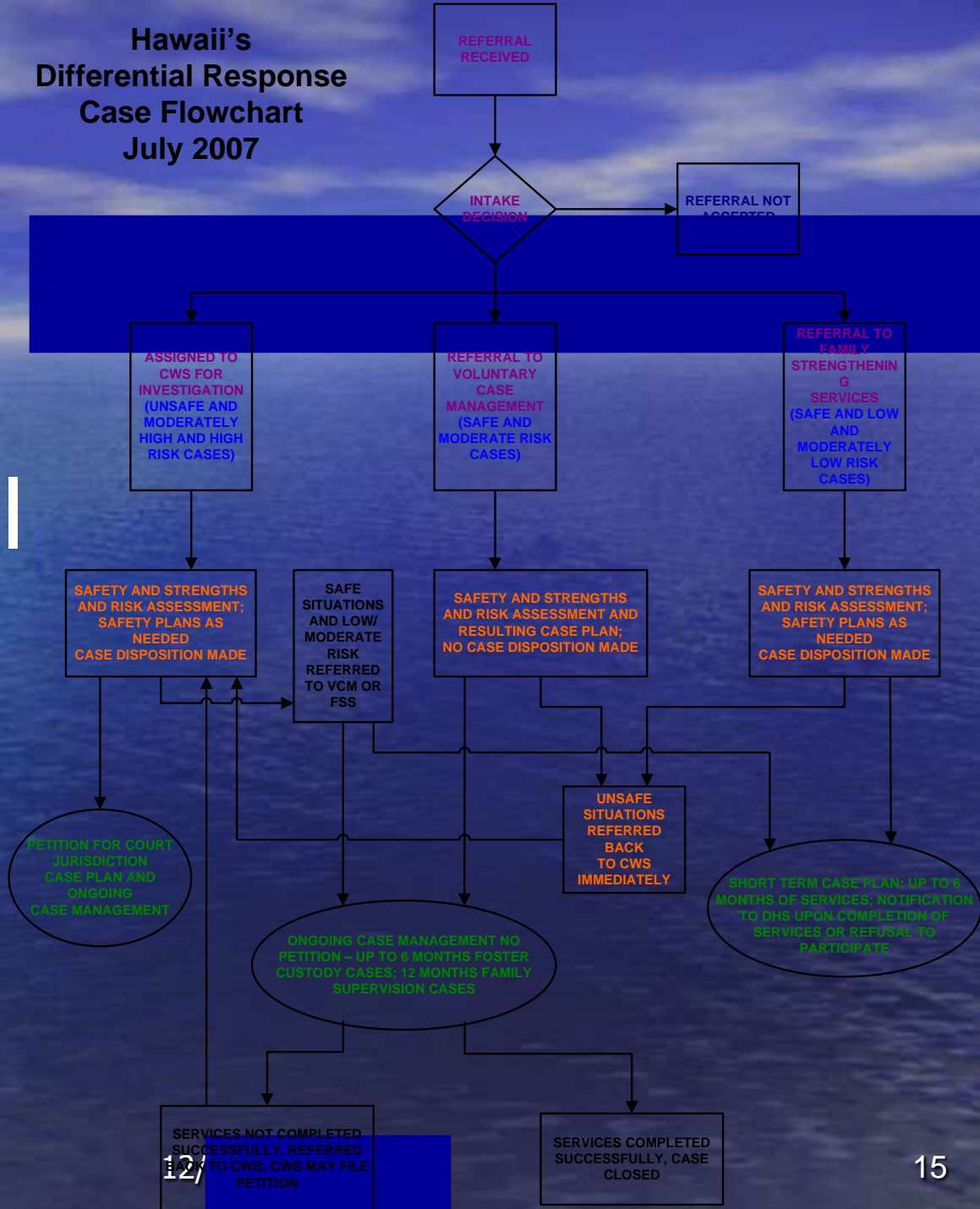
- Risk is considered on a continuum and can be present in different degrees, such as low, moderate or high. For example, for the risk factor “Prior History, Severity, Chronicity”:
 - Low – Isolated incidents in the past
 - Moderate – Intermittent incidents in the past
 - High – Repeated and ongoing pattern of abuse or neglect

Web Based Intake System

- Central to Hawaii's effort to implement the Differential Response System was the development and successful implementation of an improved web-based intake tool and intake process that:
 - Incorporates assessments of risk and safety.
 - Ensures consistency in intake assessments.
 - Clarifies and documents the CWS response to reports of abuse/neglect.
 - Documents and maintains intake assessments and decisions.
 - Provides the opportunity to track outcomes.

Hawaii's Differential Response Case Flowchart July 2007

Hawaii's Differential Response



Assessments

- Intake Assessment:

The Intake Assessment is used to determine the appropriate response to the report.

- Safety assessment:

The Safety Assessment is used to determine immediate or imminent threats of substantial harm and to develop a safety plan to ensure the safety of the child. All reports undergo a safety assessment whether or not they are placed in voluntary services or retained by CWS

- Comprehensive Assessment:

The Comprehensive Assessment is used to do a full assessment of a family's strengths, safety issues and to determine what resources are needed to assist the family.

Intake

- Intake will receive a report and make one of the following decisions, based on the intake assessment:
 - If the report does not meet the intake criteria, no action will be taken
 - If the report presents a safety concern, CWS will always investigate and take appropriate action.
 - If the report presents moderate risk, but no safety concerns, the family will be placed in Voluntary Case Management services
 - If the report is assessed as low risk, the family will be offered Family Strengthening Services

Family Strengthening Services (FSS)

- If the family is offered FSS and is willing to participate, they will be provided up to six months of services and assistance in developing resources and supports that will enable them to resolve the issues that resulted in the report to CWS.
- If the family chooses not to participate, that information will be provided to CWS.
- In most cases, no further action is taken.

Voluntary Case Management (VCM)

- If the family is placed in the VCM program and agrees to participate, it will receive a comprehensive assessment and a case plan that identifies risk concerns and the plan to address those concerns
- Services will be provided at no cost to the family and, if the outcomes identified in the case plan are successfully achieved, the case will not result in a CPS finding
- If the family chooses not to participate or prematurely terminates services, the case will be routed back to CWS for action, which may result in an investigation and a possible petition to the court for jurisdiction and a court ordered service plan.

Voluntary Case Liaison (VCL)

A key element in the successful implementation of the voluntary case management units was the creation of the VCL positions.

VCLs are experienced social workers housed in voluntary case management units that serve as a link between the VCM units and the department. The VCLs, who have no caseloads, assist the programs with risk and safety assessments, consult on cases and enter data into the CWS database.

CWS

- If a case presents a safety concern, the case will be accepted by CWS and an investigation will be conducted.
- If the CWS investigation identifies no safety concerns and determines conditions in the home to be a low or moderate risk, the family will be placed in the FSS or VCM programs for services or other appropriate interventions that do not involve the Court
- If the report is investigated and confirms a safety issue in the home, CWS may file a petition in Family Court for jurisdiction over the family.

EPIC, Inc. `Ohana Conferencing Programs

`Ohana Conferences

- `OHANA CONFERENCES
- RE-CONFERENCES
- CASE REUNIFICATION / SAFETY PLAN
- CASE CLOSING / SAFETY PLAN
- CONFLICT RESOLUTION CONFERENCES
- VOLUNTARY CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCES
- FAMILY STRENGTHENING & SUPPORT CONFERENCES

E Makua Ana Youth Circles

- YOUTH CIRCLES
- YOUTH RE-CIRCLES
- GEIST GRANT
- YOUTH OUTREACH

`Ohana Community Outreach

- DISCUSSING THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM
 - ✓ *FAMILY*
 - ✓ *SERVICE PROVIDERS*
 - ✓ *THE COMMUNITY*

Legal Services

- ADOPTION
- GUARDIANSHIP
- CHANGE OF CUSTODY
- POWER OF ATTORNEY

Family Connection

- FAMILY FINDING
- FAMILY CONNECTIONS FOR KEIKI (0-3, IN FC)
- FAMILY CONNECTIONS FOR YOUTH (16+, IN PC)
- FAMILY CONNECTIONS CONSORTIUM PARTNERS
- KEIKI PLACEMENT PROJECT PARTNERS

Kokua ` Ohana

- Outreach to Hawaiian Families
- Culturally sensitive
- Relationship building
- Recruitment of Hawaiian families for foster care/family support
- Partnership with CWS

Training

- The Department has provided training to CWS staff and to our partner agencies in the community that are providing FSS and VCM services.
- All partners and CWS are using the same procedures, forms etc.
- CORE and ongoing training to all CWS and VCM staff also provided.

Benefits

- A supportive relationship built upon respect and trust is developed between worker and family.
- Families understand that it is time to take care of things and that Child Welfare Services wants them to engage in preventative services.
- Collaboration and coordination with other providers prevents families from being overwhelmed with good intention services.
- The process has become more pro active in helping the whole family.
- The process is about informing, educating and engaging the community at large about their responsibility in caring for children.

DRS Outcomes

- Recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect decreased from 5.7% in SFY 2004 to 3.9% in SFY 2009. Currently at 1.6%.
- 46 % of Referrals, up from 38% to CWS intake are being triaged to the FSS and VCM programs. (SFY 09 1st and 2nd quarter)
- Approximately 11% of referrals, down from 15% in SFY 08 to FSS and VCM are returned due to safety concerns or non-participation (VCM only).
- Children in out-of-home care decreased by 50% since 2003.
- The average caseload for each CWS worker has been maintained at approximately 18 cases or below.

Hawaii 2003 CFSR PIP Results

- **Hawaii achieved its PIP goals for all 5 CFSR Systemic Factors and 5 of the 6 outcomes that had to be addressed**
- **Within the outcomes, Hawaii achieved its PIP goals for all CFSR Items**

Fast forward....CFSR 2009

- Strengths:
 - Repeat Maltreatment (Item 2)
 - Foster Care Reentry (Item 5)
 - Proximity of placement in care (Item 11)
- 87% Safety Outcome 1
- 89.2% Well Being Outcome 2

CFSR 2009

- Positive comments in the areas of:
 - Implementing Differential Response System
 - Engaging community and stakeholders including:
 - Native Hawaiian community
 - Youth
 - Adoptive parents and
 - Resource Caregivers (Foster Parents)
 - Passed 5 out of the 7 systemic factors (staff and provider training and case review system)
 - Hawaii passed all national Data Standards

CFSR 2010

- Some areas to work on:
 - Timeliness of adoption (Item 9)
 - Needs assessment and services provided to parents, children, and resource caregivers (Item 17)
 - Case worker visits with parents (Item 20)

Four Primary Strategy Areas PIP 2010

- Ensuring safety of all children in their homes and in foster care.
- Enhance engagement in case planning with parents, child/youth, and relatives through the life of the case.
- Improve permanency outcomes and family connections for children.
- Improve the case review system with the Family Court.

Reduction in Disproportionality

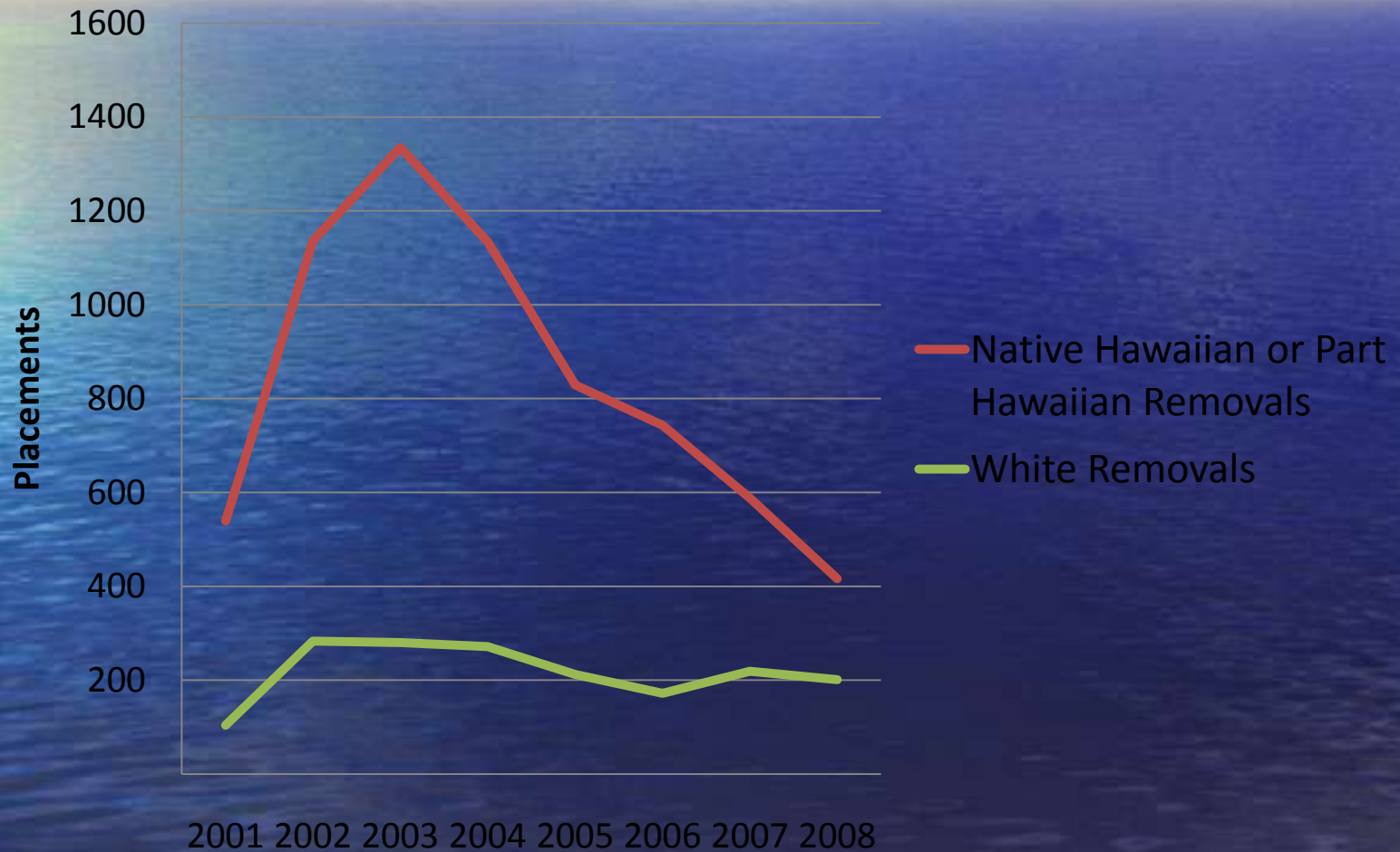
Comparative Placement Trends Relative to Investigations for Native Hawaiian/Part Hawaiian and White Children

- Overall child removals have been pretty steady at around 31.5% of investigations with a spike in 2006 at 37.7% and now have dropped to close to prior levels.
- However, White removal rates have increased during the period from 29 % of investigations to 43 % between fiscal years 2001 and 2008.
- Over time there has been an increase in the % of children investigated with unknown ethnicities. The increase is from 13% to 27 % missing investigations data between fiscal years 2001 and 2008. The exception is fiscal year 2006 where unknowns dropped. For fiscal year 2006 this is probably because more children overall were removed and there are less unknown ethnicities among removals (6% verses non removals at 24%). Unfortunately, the increase in missing ethnicity data for investigated children makes the interpretation of the trends in disparities less clear.

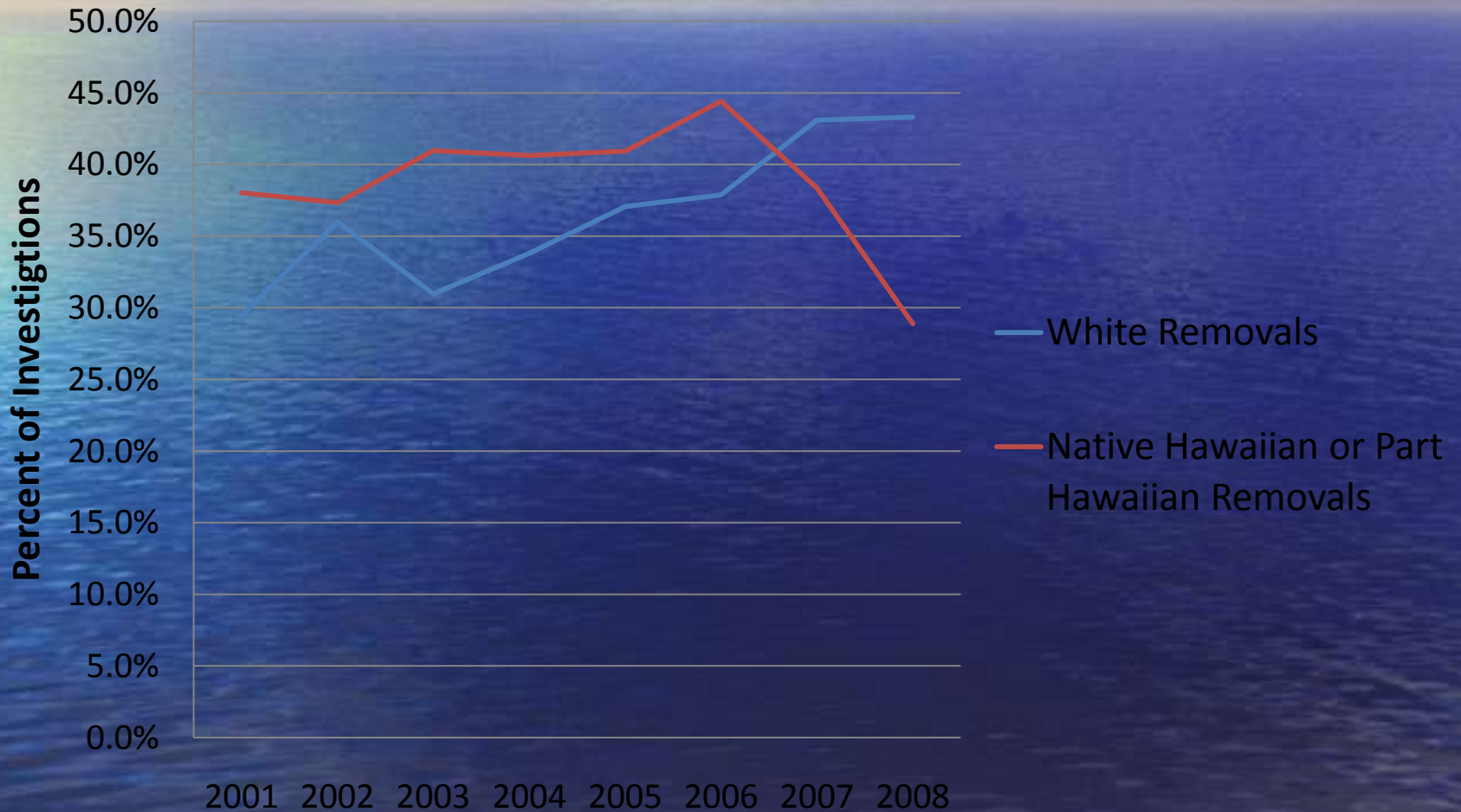
Comparative Placement Trends Relative to Investigations for Native Hawaiian/Part Hawaiian and White Children (continued)

- The removal rate in relation to investigations of Hawaiians or Part Hawaiians looks quite different if you assume that the unknowns are Hawaiians or Part Hawaiians. The rate is much lower when unknowns are added to the Hawaiian group. (Or if the unknown ethnicities are randomly distributed across ethnicities, the real removal rates for each ethnicity are lower than currently stated).
- Whichever Hawaiian rate is used (unknowns excluded or unknowns treated as Hawaiian or part Hawaiian), the pattern in disparities vis. a vis. Whites is the same. Hawaiian or Part Hawaiian disparity ratios have dropped in 2007/2008. Hence, disparity ratios have dropped for Hawaiians or Part Hawaiians
- The overall trend comparison of Hawaiian and Part Hawaiian to all other ethnic group (including Whites) shows a pattern of overall reductions in disparities as well during the same time period

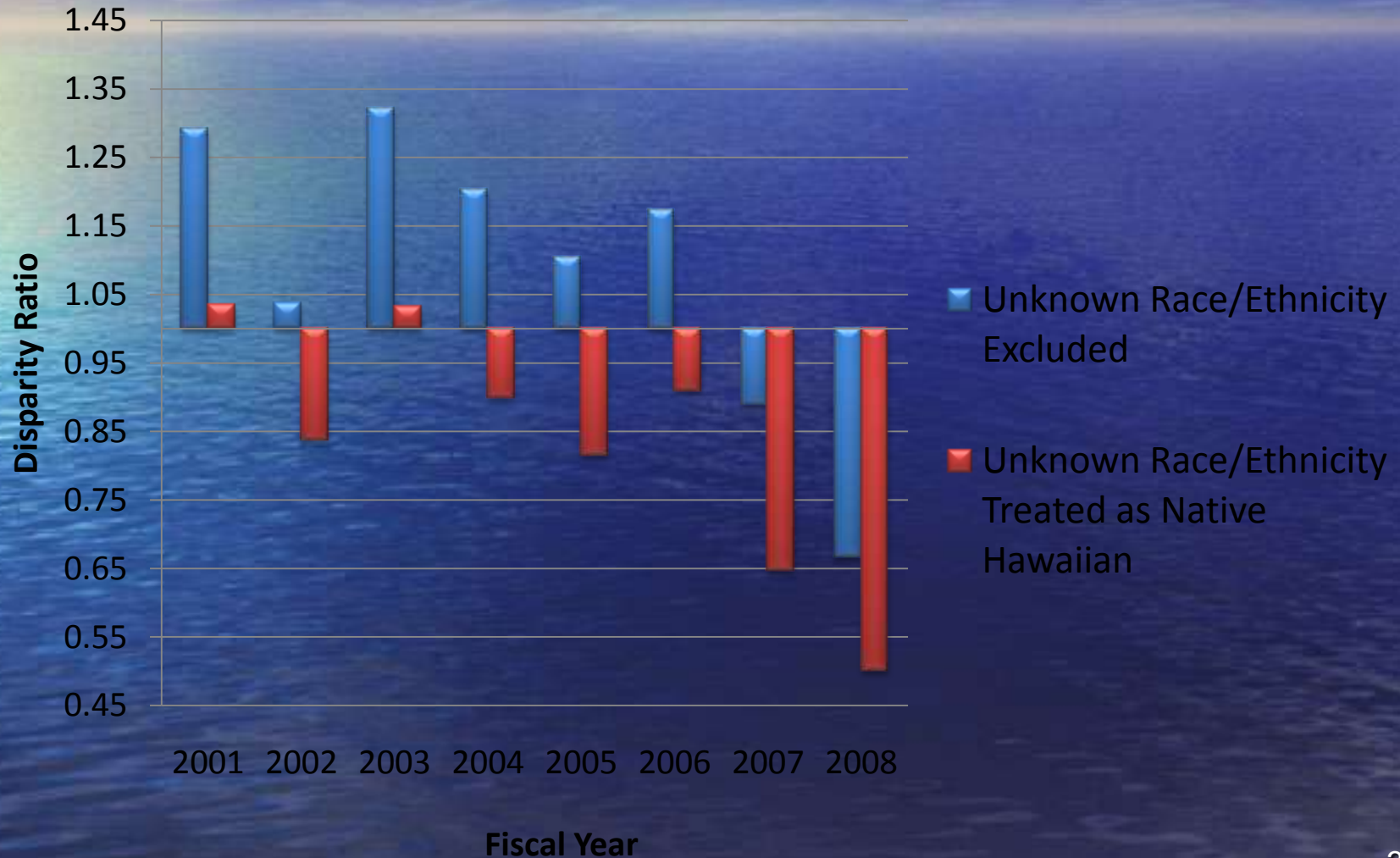
Trend in Number of Placements



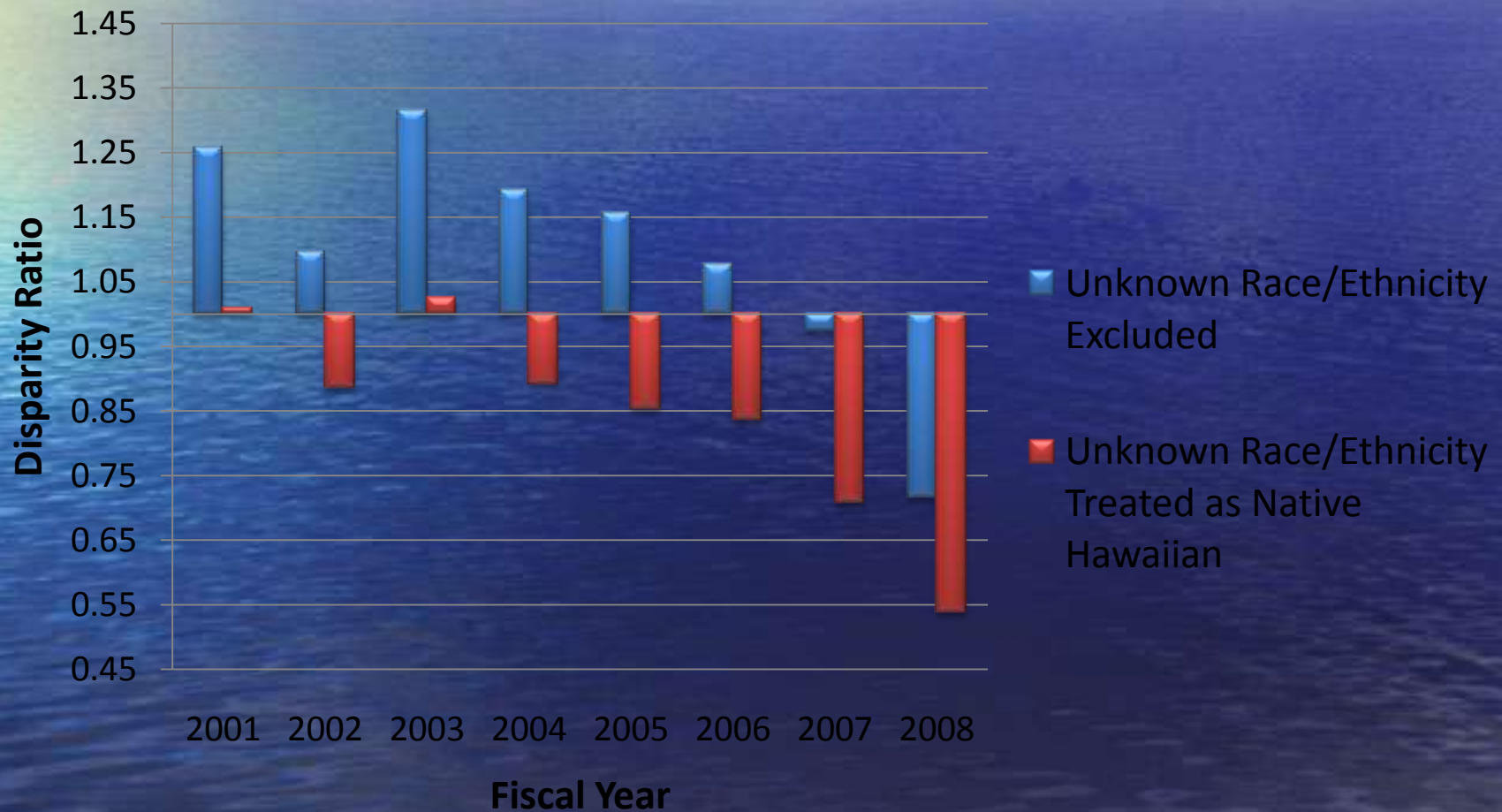
Trends in Placements as a Percentage of Investigations



Placement Disparity: Native Hawaiian or Part Hawaiian to White



Placement Disparity: Native Hawaiian or Part Hawaiian to All Other Ethnic Groups (including White)



Additional Initiatives to Support Practice Change and Outcome Achievement

Casey 2020 Initiative

- Reduce the number of children in foster care by 50% by 2020
 - Safely reduce the number of children entering foster care
 - Increase number of children safely returned to family/kin
 - Increase the number of permanent connections for children who cannot reunify with family/kin.
- Strategic Consulting in each State
- Casey/DHS contract initiated in October, 2007

Strategic Plan

- **Permanency Roundtables**
- **Early Placement Roundtables**
- **Practice Model**
- **Rapid Assessment Instruments**
- **AHA – Collaboration with Native Hawaiian Community**
- **Updated Policies and Procedures**
- **Threatened Harm**

Fostering Connections Grant

- Early 'Ohana Intervention and Family finding
 - to prevent children from entering care by address safety concerns with a safety plan and identify and place with relatives if removal is necessary
 - A family meeting will be held prior to placement or within 24 – 72 hours of placement, then a 15 to 30 day re-conference
 - 2 sites on Oahu identified as having the highest placement rates birth to age 17.
 - 40 cases randomized per year.

Fostering Connections Grant

- Enhanced `Ohana Connections
 - To help move cases towards permanency
 - develop family connections for children age 4-14 in long term care (minimum of 12 months) that do not have a permanent legal and/or emotional family connection
 - Family Connections: family finding, family engagement, assessment, team building, development of permanent family connections and ongoing permanency support efforts.
 - `Ohana Conference to facilitate permanency effort

Relative Placement Preference

- Statutorily required
- Legislation passed in partnership with Office of Hawaiian Affairs and other partners
- Defines Hanai relative
- Requires placement preference

Keiki Placement Project

- Weekly review by CWS administrators with EPIC staff of all cases with children, age 0 to 3
- To identify services and actions to prevent placement and
- Ensure that relatives are identified and engaged early on in the case for placement if necessary and as support and connection for the child and family.



Questions and Discussion

For additional information:

Theresa Costello
NRCCPS

theresa.costello@action4cp.org

505-301-3105