Bios of Speakers and Panelists

Susan Ault:
Over the last five years Ms. Ault has been leading an effort in Ramsey County Community Human Services (RCCHSD) to eliminate racial disparities in the Child Protection system. This effort includes other agencies in the system, as well as engagement of the community and consumers. This effort is focusing on the identification of evidenced practice and its application to addressing the barriers families face in Ramsey County to achieving better outcomes for their children and families with an emphasis on practice change and systems change. She is also a leader in RCCHSD’s anti-racism initiative and serves on the agencies Anti-Racism Leadership Team. Ms. Ault is also on the Board of Directors for the St Paul YWCA, and for Our Children: Our Future, a statewide effort to address racial disparities in out of home placement. She has represented counties in the negotiations of the Minnesota Tribal/State Agreement both in 1999 and 2006. She has extensive ICWA experience.

Carl C. Bell:
Dr. Bell is the President/CEO of Community Mental Health Council, Inc., a $21 million comprehensive CMHC in Chicago employing 360 geniuses. He is the Principle Investigator of “Using CHAMP to Prevent Youth HIV Risk in a South African Township,” an NIMH R-01 Grant. He is also the Director of Public & Community Psychiatry, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry & Public Health, and Co-Director of the UIC Interdisciplinary Violence Prevention Research Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Dr. Bell has 350 publications, the most recent being The Sanity of Survival: Reflections on Community Mental Health and Wellness and Eight Pieces of Brocade, a 45 minute chi kung exercise DVD.

Harold E, Briggs:
Dr. Briggs is a Full Professor with the School of Social Work at Portland state University. He focuses on child welfare and child mental health service delivery and human service management issues. He has a particular interest in evidence based practice and evidence based management for practicing administrators and managers of both professionally led and family driven advocacy and support organizations. He is a multiple graduate of the School of Social Service Administration at The University of Chicago with dual focus on social Administration and Clinical Social Work. He trained for seven months as a Post Graduate at the Family Institute of Chicago. Dr. Briggs co-founded Family and Youth Driven Institute for Change of St. Louis, Inc. with Ms. Carolyn Sweets and ten other committed African American parent and youth leaders. They seek to use the evidence based practice process as an evaluation function for African American families of youth with serious emotional disorders who received wraparound services from a six year federally funded system of care. Additionally, they seek to implement and study the application of a parent led Motivation Family Management Training approach on the reduction of health disparities among the parent and youth recipients of the abovementioned federally funded program in St. Louis, Missouri. Twenty parent leaders in St. Louis will be trained by Oregon Social learning center trainers. Trainer and participant data will be collected pre-post and analysis to determine relevance and intervention effectiveness. Dr. Briggs is on the
editorial board of the Journal of Behavior and Social Issues, is a peer reviewer for Research On Social Work Practice and grant applications, and does onsite reviews for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

**Jacquelyn McCroskey:**
Dr. McCroskey is the John Milner Professor of Child Welfare at the USC School of Social Work. For over two decades, she has used data and scholarship to inform policy and guide improvements to local government systems serving children and families. She is one of the founders of the LA County Children’s Planning Council, a collaborative network of ten councils that has been called “possibly the strongest and most influential cross-system vehicle advocating for reform of children’s services system in a major US metropolitan area.” Her research includes service analysis, financing and performance measurement in public and private systems. She led development of the Family Assessment Form, a measure of family functioning now in wide use to guide assessment and measure the impact of family-centered child welfare services. She serves as a Commissioner on the First 5 LA Commission and the County Child Care Policy Roundtable, and served on the City of LA Commission on Children, Youth and Families from 1997-2006. She serves as Research Director for the Children and Families Research Consortium, a partnership between DCFS and the five universities in the county with graduate schools of social work – USC, UCLA, Cal State LA, Cal State Long Beach and Cal State Northridge.

**John Poupart:**
Mr. Poupart received his Masters of Public Policy (MPA) from Harvard University and his BA in Criminal Justice from the University of Minnesota. He is the president and founder of the American Indian Policy Center, a unique non-profit American Indian organization doing research (reality-based) and advocacy for American Indians’ policy issues. The mission of the organization is to provide accurate historic and cultural information about American Indians. Mr. Poupart is also responsible directly and indirectly for helping start many American Indian social service programs in Minnesota. He is founder of Anishinabe Longhouse, a culturally specific corrections halfway house for American Indian ex-offenders. He was appointed by Minnesota Governor Rudy Perpich as Ombudsman for Corrections; served on the Minneapolis Civil Rights Commission; Minneapolis City Planning Commission, and Minneapolis Charter Commission. After his retirement from the Department of Corrections, he brought members of the American Indian community together to start a new Indian leadership group in St. Paul (St. Paul Indians in Action). He has also sponsored a number of Policy and Issues Forums for the Indian community and for non-Indians who work with the Indian communities. He was responsible for creating a Health Disparities Committee in the Indian community of Minneapolis and a committee to address the disparities of American Indian children placed out of home in Minnesota.

**Carol Wilson Spigner:**
Dr. Spigner, Kenneth L. M. Pray Professor at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice, is co-director of the Field Center for Children's Policy Practice and
Research. The Field Center is a multi-disciplinary voice for children in the child welfare system through its research, education and policy work bringing together the Schools of Social Policy and Practice, Law, and Medicine to examine critical issues affecting abused and neglected children. Dr. Spigner was previously the associate commissioner for the Children’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families. She has served as a commissioner on the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care, as a senior editorial advisor to The Future of Children: Children, Families and Foster Care, and as a director for the Center for the Study of Social Policy and Children’s Rights, Inc. Dr. Spigner received her D.S.W. and M.S.W. degrees from the University of Southern California. Her current research focuses on documenting the experience of parents in the child welfare system.

Carolyn Sweets:
Ms. Sweets is the co-founder and leader of Family and Youth Driven Institute For Change of St. Louis Inc. She has been an effective foster parent to teenage African American youth for more than twenty years. Through research and training partnerships with Dr. Harold Briggs and other EBP researchers and trainers, she conducts participatory research that seeks to reduce health disparities among families of youth with serious emotional disorders involved in child welfare and mental health systems of care. She is a STARS trainer and a respected faith based and community resident of St. Louis. Ms. Sweets has both a B.A. and a M.Ed. degree. She has worked as a high school counselor, program administrator of an Upward Bound Program, and founder of a Christian school. She is married and the mother of three daughters.

Nealcheng X. Thao:
Mr. Thao received his MSW from the University of Minnesota and is currently an Ed.D. candidate. He has fourteen years of social work experience at Ramsey County Community Human Services, of which five years were in child protection, three years as a juvenile delinquent specialist, and six years as case manager for children with developmental delays. In addition, he has been on the social work faculty at Metropolitan State University for ten years and has served for eight years on the St. Paul Public School board, an elected position. He has been a paraprofessional for the Indochinese Refugees Resettlement program and an involved community activist and children’s advocate since 1976.

Patricia Torres Ray:
Senator Torres Ray is the first Latina to be elected to the Minnesota State Senate. She now represents Minneapolis Senate District 62 in the State Legislature. Prior to her election to the Senate, she worked as a State Program Administrator for the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Senator Torres Ray has 18 years of experience in public service and community organizing. She has vast experience in building partnerships between agencies, non-profit organizations, tribal reservations and other organizations that serve children and families. She has served as a board member of the University of Minnesota Children, Youth and Family Consortium, the Minnesota Early Care and Education Finance Commission, the Minnesota Children's Trust Fund, Cultural Beginnings, the Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association, West Side Health Center, Kids Count, Children’s Defense Fund, National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention, The Build Initiative, The Northway Community
Trust. Senator Torres Ray has two degrees from the University of Minnesota: a Bachelor’s Degree in Urban Studies and a Master’s Degree in Public Affairs from the Humphrey Institute.

**Susan J. Wells:**
Dr. Wells is the Gamble Skogmo Land Grant Chair in Child Welfare and Youth Policy at the University of Minnesota School of Social Work. She focuses on child welfare practice and policy with special interests in risk assessment and screening, decision-making, service coordination, and promoting research-based practice. Recently, Dr. Wells served as a consultant on a study for DHS involving racial disparities in out-of-home care and served as principal investigator of a study of racial disparities in four Minnesota counties. In collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS); the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare and the Children; and the Youth and Families Consortium, Dr. Wells developed a child welfare research agenda to help guide policy and practice in Minnesota. She has served as principal investigator on studies of foster care placement stability and reentry into foster care in Hennepin County. She is a member of the editorial board of *Children and Youth Services Review* and has served as an expert consultant on a variety of national panels. Dr. Wells received her M.S.W. from State University of New York at Albany, her doctorate from the University of Southern California, and was an NIMH post-doctoral fellow in Psychiatric Epidemiology at The Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health.