

Results of the Safe Start Network Analysis Project

The existing “CEV system” in Chatham County consists primarily of those organizations that serve the current or potential child targets of violence and their families.

Secondarily, it consists of the organizations that serve the child witness of violence because the child is part of a family that is receiving services for another reason, usually family violence. No Chatham County organization, agency or program serves a child and his family because the child has witnessed violence, unless the violent incident endangered the child in a manner consistent with a legal finding of neglect, and the child is a client of CPS.

Therefore, three key elements of the Initiative’s overall mission are to develop a comprehensive child witness component of the Chatham County CEV system, integrate it with the existing child target component, and foster the highest level of collaboration possible among the organizations that comprise the resulting CEV super-system. The Initiative will develop the child witness component by creating new services and enhancing existing services, and it will foster interagency collaboration in the CEV super-system by encouraging both new and existing organizations to work together in the most efficient and effective manner.

While there has not been a great deal of research into interagency collaboration, most studies have found that it has promising results. When agencies collaborate they can expect to see an increase in the numbers of new clients identified (Garrett et al, 1998), referrals (Garrett et al, 1998; Ridgely et al, 1998), funding (Garrett et al, 1998; Katz et al, 1990), networking (Garrett et al, 1998), and family participation in services (Clausen et al, 1998). Service systems may experience an increase in resource exchange (Rivard et al, 1999), interagency communication (Pandiani and Maynard, 1993), service coordination (Garrett et al, 1998; Pandiani and Maynard, 1993), joint assessment of clients (Ridgely et al, 1998), and jointly sponsored training (Ridgely et al, 1998). Most importantly, clients served by agencies that collaborate experience fewer delays between referral and intake (Borgeson and Cusick, 1994), increased access to services (McGee, 1996), improvement in developmental outcomes (Garrett et al, 1998), improvement in mental health outcomes (Rogers et al, 1989), and an increase in the attainment of individual goals (Malloy et al, 1998).

However, a truly collaborative CEV super-system may be difficult to achieve, as the environment for child and family services has not traditionally supported inter-organizational collaboration. Public child and family service organizations tend to function as independent proprietors of service programs that are both nourished by and tightly constrained by narrow streams of state and federal funding. The laws, rules and policies that govern the administration of these services tend to discourage local service collaboration and integration. Private service organizations, on the other hand, typically compete with one another for limited resources and have little incentive to work together to accomplish common goals.

As a result, in many communities there are both gaps and overlaps in the availability of services, and information is not routinely shared between organizations about their services or their clients. Potential clients may never be informed about the range of services available to them, and clients who are aware of the services that are available must often travel large distances between the offices of multiple providers in order to submit the same personal and family information over and over again. Some needy children and families simply “fall through the cracks.”

In order to understand how well the existing Chatham County CEV system is performing, gauge the level and nature of the collaboration that exists among the organizations that serve CEV, and develop a strategy for fostering collaboration among the organizations that will comprise the eventual CEV super-system, the Initiative contracted with the Jordan Institute to conduct a formal study of the existing Chatham County CEV system.

Because collaboration is an outcome of the relationships between organizations, a study of organizational collaboration must include both an analysis of those relationships and an analysis of the collaborative network itself (i.e., the organizational system, or who is working with whom). Therefore, in attempting to understand and clearly describe the existing Chatham County CEV system and the relationships that bind the members of that system together, the Institute employed both quantitative and graphical network analysis methods. These methods produced findings that reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system. They also illuminate the structure and character of the inter-organizational relationships that underlie those strengths and weaknesses.

The study made use of data collected during 85 telephone interviews completed between June 2000 and May 2001. Individuals providing information during the interviews were key informants from local organizations who provide both direct and indirect services that might benefit CEV between the ages of 0 and 9, and their families.

A first round of interviews was conducted with key informants from organizations that had been identified by members of the CMT. With the exceptions indicated below, a first round key informant was the individual identified by the CMT member as the person most knowledgeable about the organization’s full range of activities and most knowledgeable about the other organizations with which his or her organization works in carrying out those activities.

During the first round of interviews each key informant was asked to list all the services provided by his or her organization that might benefit CEV. He or she was then asked to identify all the other local organizations, agencies or programs with which his or her organization works in providing those services, and to identify his or her primary contact person at each cited organization, program or agency. Finally, the key informant was asked to rate the existing CEV system in eleven critical areas. A continuously updated list was kept of cited organizations. Organizations cited during the first round that had not been surveyed during the first round were surveyed during a second round of interviews. The key informant for a second round interview was the cited primary contact person or an alternate designated by either the cited person or the director of the cited

organization. The Institute relied on the key informant to decide what it means to “work with” another organization.

This method identified at least one key informant from each organization. However, some Chatham County organizations are so large and complex that it was necessary to interview representatives of the pertinent sub-units of the organization. For example, within the Department of Social Services key informants were identified for the Child Protective Services Unit, the Child Protective Services Intake Unit, and the Foster Care/Adoption and Work First/Adult Services Units.

This process ensured that the Institute identified the best possible key informants and came close to enumerating the entire population of organizations and organizational sub-units that are or might become significant actors in the Safe Start CEV super-system. It was not possible, however, to complete interviews with all key informants. In nine cases a key informant could not be contacted or refused to participate. Overall, 85 of 94 key informants were interviewed for a total completion rate of 90%.

An experienced interviewer was selected, trained and supervised by the Institute. Interviews were conducted by telephone and consisted of both open-ended and multiple-choice questions. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the key informant and required about 30 minutes to complete. The data from interviews were entered into a customized database in preparation for analyses.

For the purposes of the Community Assessment, quantitative and graphical data were analyzed in order to answer the following questions:

- (A) What organizations, agencies and programs comprise the existing Chatham County CEV service system?
- (B) What are the characteristics of the organizations, agencies or programs that comprise this system?
- (C) What does this system “look” like, and what is the nature of the working relationships that connect the organizational members of the system?
- (D) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the system?

For the purposes of the Strategic Plan, data were analyzed in order to answer the following question:

- (E) What strategies for fostering collaboration in the Safe Start CEV super-system do the findings of the quantitative and graphical analyses suggest?

Findings

- (A) What organizations, agencies and programs comprise the existing CEV service system?

For the purposes of this analysis the Institute defined the existing Chatham County CEV system as being comprised of those organizations, agencies and programs whose key informants reported that they 1) offer services expressly designed to benefit the child targets of violence or their families, the potential

child targets of violence or their families, or the child witnesses of violence who are part of families that receive services for another reason, or, 2) offer services to those children and families as the result of a direct or indirect relationship with the organizations, agencies or programs referenced in “1.”

1. The “core members” of the existing CEV system are the thirty organizations, agencies and programs whose key informants reported that they offer services expressly designed to benefit the above children and their families. These organizations, agencies and programs are:

Department of Social Services – Child Protective Services Unit
Department of Social Services – CPS Intake Unit
Chatham County Public Schools – Basic Needs for Children Program
Chatham County Public Schools – Elementary Student Assistance Program
Chatham County Schools – Intercede to Succeed/Little Kids Program
North Chatham Elementary School
Siler City Elementary School
Sheriff’s Department – C.A.R.E./D.A.R.E. Program
Sheriff’s Department – Domestic Violence Officer
Sheriff’s Department – Juvenile Detective
Pittsboro Police Department
Siler City Police Department
Office of the District Attorney
Public Defender’s Office
District Court – Administrative Office/Judges
NC Department of Juvenile Justice – Office of Delinquency Prevention
Guardian Ad Litem Program
Hispanic Liaison Assistance to Targets Office
Dispute Settlement Center
Family Violence Resource Center – Coalition for Family Peace
Family Violence Resource Center – Child Abuse Prevention Program
Family Violence Resource Center – Peace Program (English)
Family Violence Resource Center – Peace Program (Spanish)
Family Violence Resource Center – Court Advocacy Program
Family Violence Resource Center – Teaching Non-Violence/Homes Program
Family Violence Resource Center – Transitional Housing Program
Chatham County Together Program
Casaworks for Families Program
Family Resource Center – Smart Start Program
Family Resource Center – Spanish Smart Start Program

2a) The organizations, agencies and programs that reported that they offer services to CEV and their families by virtue of a direct relationship with the above (“core member”) organizations are:

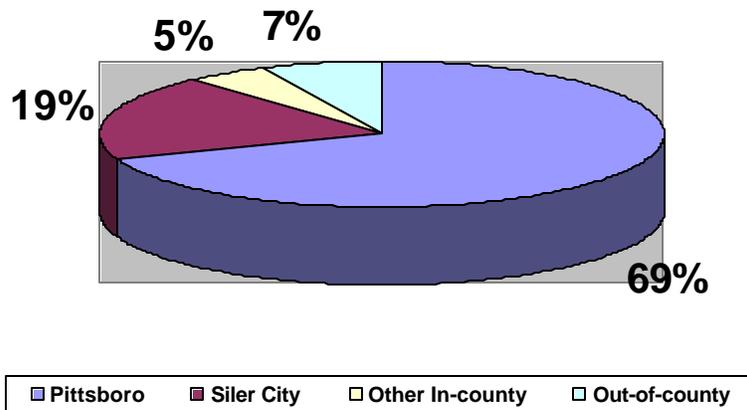
The Salvation Army
Chatham Transit Network
Bennett Elementary School
Bonlee Elementary School
Silk Hope Elementary School
Pittsboro Baptist Mission
Alston Chapel
Evergreen United Methodist Church
First Missionary Baptist Church
Pittsboro Presbyterian Church
Pittsboro United Methodist Church
Siler City Presbyterian Church
Saint Julia Catholic Church
Emmanuel United Holiness Church of America
Mount United Methodist Church
Chatham County Partnership for Children – Smart Start Program
Department of Social Services – Health Choice Program
The United Way
Mary Neal Child Care Center
Orange-Person-Chatham Counseling Center – Area Program
Orange-Person-Chatham Counseling Center – Children and Youth Program
Orange-Person-Chatham Counseling Center – Preschool Outreach Program
Orange-Person-Chatham Counseling Center – Substance Abuse/High Risk Program
Department of Health – Family Outreach (Healthy Families) Program
Department of Health – Health Resources Van
Department of Health – Parent Education Program
Department of Health – Health Education Program
Housing Authority
Chatham County Hospital – Immigrant Health Initiative
Child Care Networks, Inc.
Early Intervention and Family Services Program
Family Violence Resource Center – Crisis Intervention Program
PTA Thrift Store
Joint Orange-Chatham Community Action Program
Chatham Outreach Alliance, Inc.
Head Start

2b) The organizations, agencies and programs who reported that they offer services to CEV and their families by virtue of an indirect relationship with the core organizations listed in “1” (i.e., having a direct relationship only with the organizations in “2a”) are:

- Pittsboro Elementary School
- Pittsboro Elementary School – Preschool Program
- Department of Social Services – Foster Care/Adoption Services Unit
- Department of Social Services – Work First/Adult Services Unit
- Department of Health – Clinics
- Department of Health – Healthy Chatham Program
- Department of Health – WeCare Program
- Department of Health – Child Services Coordination Program
- Department of Health – Chatham Social Health Council HIV/Aids Program
- University of North Carolina – Chatham Primary Care Program
- Child Care Network – Reaching Out to Latino Families
- Faith Family Ministries
- Heaven’s Manna Christian Center
- Holy Trinity United Holiness Church
- Liberty Chapel United Church of Christ
- Union Grove AME Zion Church
- White Rock Untied Holiness Church
- St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church
- First Wesleyan Church
- Piedmont Health Services – WIC Program
- Council on Aging
- Helping Hands Center
- Gold Kist, Inc.
- Townsend, Inc.

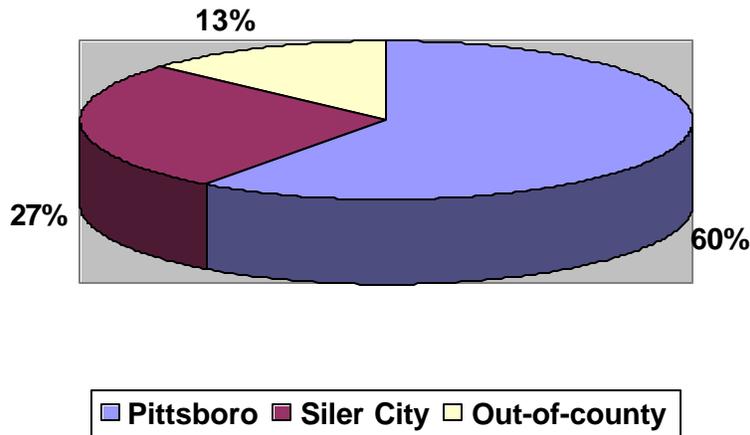
(B) What are the characteristics of the organizations that comprise the existing CEV system?

Chart 1: CEV System Member Location



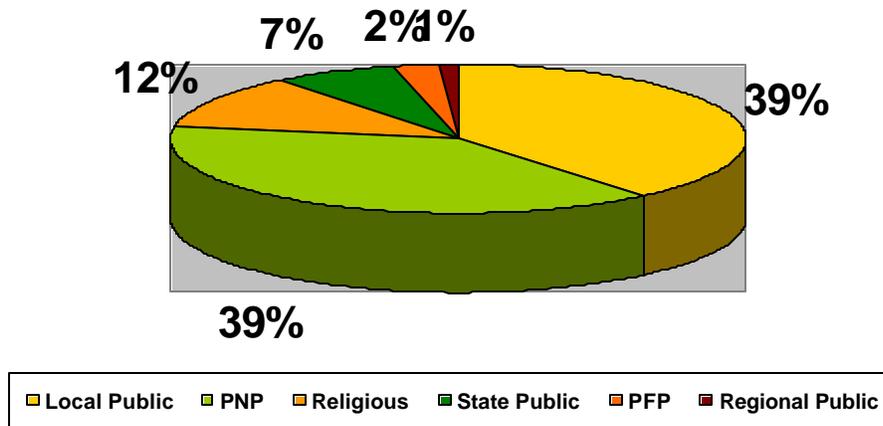
According to information provided by the key informants, 59 (69%) of the above 85 organizations, agencies or programs are based in Pittsboro, while 16 (19%) are based in Siler City. Of the remaining ten, four (5%) are based in other parts of the county, and six (7%) are based outside of the county.

Chart 2: CEV System Core Member Location



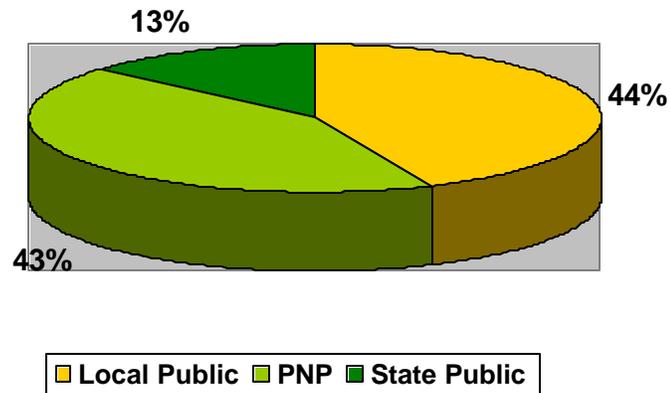
Looking only at the 30 core member organizations, 18 (60%) are based in Pittsboro, 8 (27%) in Siler City, and 4 (13%) outside of the county.

Chart 3: CEV System Member Tax Status



Thirty-three (39%) of the 85 organizations, agencies or programs that comprise the system are local government organizations, while an equal number are private not-for-profit organizations. Ten organizations (12%) are religious, six (7%) are state government, two (2%) are private-for-profit, and one (1%) is a regional public agency.

Chart 4: CEV System Core Member Tax Status



Of the 30 core organizations, an equal number (13, or about 43%) are local government or private not-for-profit organizations. Four (13%) are state government organizations.

- C) What does the existing CEV system “look” like, and what is the nature of the working relationships that connect the organizations in this system?

The unit of measurement used to assess working relationships within the existing CEV system is the organizational dyad. The Institute defines an organizational dyad as a pair of organizations (or agencies, or programs) in which one of the organizations has been cited by the key informant of the other. For example, if the Department of Social Services Child Protective Services Unit is cited by the key informant of the Smart Start Program, then the Institute assumes that one dyad exists – a Smart Start to DSS/CPS dyad. If, in turn, the key informant for the Department of Social Services CPS Unit cites the District Attorney’s Office, the Institute assumes that an additional dyad exists – a DSS/CPS to DA dyad. A unidirectional dyad represents a unidirectional “working” relationship, is referred to as an “A to B” or “B to A” dyad, and is depicted in the following graphs by a one-headed arrow. When organizations cite each other, the resulting bi-directional dyad represents a bi-directional “working” relationship. A bi-directional dyad is referred to as an “A with B” dyad and is depicted by a two-headed arrow.

(See Graph 1)

The existing Chatham County CEV system is depicted in the Graph 1. Note that the core organizations have been highlighted with a red box.

For a rural and reasonably poor county the existing CEV system is an extremely complex. It consists of a surprisingly large number of organizations and an overwhelmingly large network of direct and indirect inter-organizational relationships. Not surprisingly, the Department of Social Services Child Protective Services Unit resides at the center of this network, largely as a result of the number of times it was cited by the key informants of the other members of the network. Other core organizations close to the center of this network are the CPS Intake Unit and the Family Violence Resource Center's Coalition for Family Peace. Non-core organizations near the center of the network include the Department of Health Clinics and the Child Care Network, both providers of critical services to the CEV and his or her family. Though it is difficult to discern, a great majority of the arrows linking the members of the system are single-headed, meaning that most of the relationships represented are unidirectional. This implies that the network depicted in the graph is largely an expression of individual organizational referral patterns, and that the existing CEV system is largely a referral system.

(See Graph 2)

Looking only at the core organizations and those members of the system that are directly related to the core organizations, a similar pattern emerges. The network is still quite large and complex, and the CPS Unit, CPS Intake Unit and Coalition for Family Peace remain prominently featured. However, it appears that the core organizations' access to the Child Care Network is a function solely of the Child Care Network's bi-directional relationship with the CPS Unit (i.e., a relationship represented on the graph by a double-headed arrow). It also appears that the core organizations' access to the services provided by Department of Health Clinics is an indirect one – none of the key informants of the core organizations reported a relationship with the DOH Clinics. Neither did the key informant of the DOH Clinics report a relationship with any core organization. Finally, it appears that the Family Violence Resource Center Peace (English) Program is the only core organization that works with religious organizations.

(See Graph 3)

Simplifying further, the Institute mapped only the relationships that the core organizations have with each other. It is again apparent that the CPS Unit, the CPS Intake Unit and the Coalition for Family Peace are central actors, but it also appears that the Dispute Settlement Center, Chatham Together and the Office of Delinquency Prevention are important members of the network of core organizations. Further, this network is well connected, with only Casaworks and the Office of the Public Defender having fewer than three relationships. However, most of relationships represented in this network are unidirectional,

again implying that even among the core CEV organizations the characteristic extent of the inter-organizational relationship is making referrals.

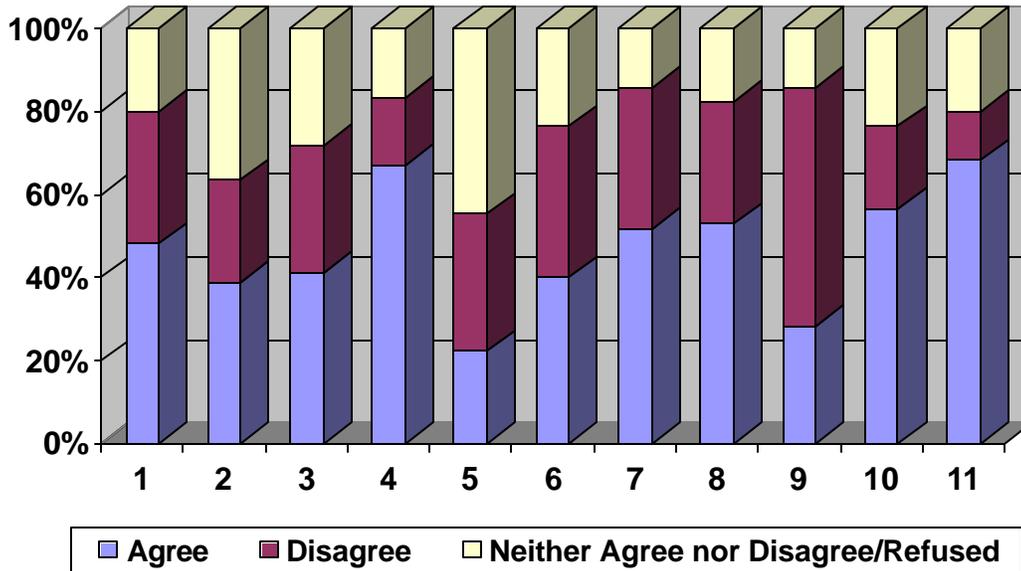
(D) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the existing CEV system?

Key informants were asked to rate the performance of the existing CEV system by disagreeing or agreeing with the following eleven statements:

1. “Overall, the Chatham County organizations that serve these children and their families are sharing case information effectively.”
2. “Overall, delays in service delivery for these children and families are minimal.”
3. “Overall, gaps in the types of services available are minimal.”
4. “Overall, duplication of services is minimal.”
5. “Overall, administrative forms from different programs for these children and families are well integrated.”
6. “Overall, services are provided at the most convenient locations.”
7. “Overall, staff in the organizations serving these children and families are aware of all the services available to them in Chatham County.”
8. “Overall, cost does not prevent these children and families from receiving services.”
9. “Overall, children and families with serious needs don’t “fall between the cracks” of the system.”
10. “Overall, administrative staff from different programs that serve these children work together very well.”
11. “Overall, service delivery staff from different programs that serve these children work together very well.”

The individual ratings given to each statement by the key informants are depicted in the following chart.

Chart 5: Agreement/Disagreement on Measures of System Performance



The key informants who responded one way or another to the above statements were quite positive in their assessment of the existing CEV system, more agreeing than disagreeing with eight of the eleven statements. One statement – “Overall, services are provided at the most convenient locations” – was too close to call. More disagreed than agreed that clients “don’t fall between cracks” in the system. Lack of integration of administrative forms was also recognized as a systemic problem.

- (E) What strategies for fostering collaboration in the Safe Start CEV super-system do the findings of the quantitative and graphical analyses suggest?

The findings of the CEV system performance analysis are encouragingly positive. However, key informants did note one problem that could, if allowed to carry over into the proposed Safe Start super-system, seriously limit the effectiveness of the super-system. The key informants indicated that CEV and their families “fall through the cracks” of the existing system. This is generally a problem resulting from poor inter-organizational case tracking, coordination and management, all of which stem from organizations failing to communicate in a systematic way with one another. In fact, the graphical network analyses confirm the lack of inter-organizational communication in the existing system, as the great majority of relationships are revealed to be unidirectional. These one-way relationships almost certainly represent an individual organization’s referral patterns, as opposed to a bi-directional representation of joint case planning and decision-making, joint staff resource training, continuously updated and shared service availability and eligibility information, and systematic feedback on the outcomes of referrals.

A practical example of how the lack of inter-organizational communication is effecting the existing CEV system is provided by the patrol officers that

participated in the Police Call Research Project. All of the officers expressed frustration with never knowing the outcome of the referral of a CEV to a community service organization, and many indicated that they no longer consider it worthwhile to make such referrals.

Fortunately, joint case planning and decision-making, joint staff resource training, continuously updated and shared service availability and eligibility information, and systematic feedback on the outcomes of referrals are some of achievable goals of a concerted effort to foster inter-organizational collaboration.

The challenge for the Initiative is to stimulate and build a coordinated system of services from among a large number of independent organizations that have a diversity of funding sponsors and administrative constraints. As noted above, among the 85 organizational members of the existing CEV network there are private for-profit and not-for-profit human service, business, religious and health organizations and programs. There are also local, regional and state government law enforcement, health, social services, judicial and educational organizations, organizational sub-units, agencies and programs. Further, 69% of these organizations are located in Pittsboro, while 95% of CEV live elsewhere in the county. Finally, over 950 relationships are reported to exist among these 85 organizations.

The Institute recommends that the Initiative begin its campaign to foster collaboration in the proposed Safe Start CEV super-system by focussing on a subset of the core members of the large and complex existing system. The graphical analyses revealed that the DSS Child Protective Services and Intake Units, the FVRC Coalition for Family Peace, the Dispute Settlement Center, Chatham Together and the Office of Delinquency Prevention are central actors in the network of core system members.

If the Initiative were to build collaborative relationships with and between this subset of core organizations, it could improve its ability to implement the strategies that will require the involvement of those organizations. These relationships could be built around identified common concerns, such as not letting CEV fall through cracks in the system. Subsequently, these organizations, in that they are key connectors to other core organizations, could collaborate with those organizations in joint case planning and decision-making, joint staff resource training, continuously updated and shared service availability and eligibility information, and systematic feedback on the outcomes of referrals.

A related strategy might be useful, given the size and complexity of the existing CEV system. The Initiative could focus on building “micro-collaboratives” around the needs of specific groups of CEV or specific groups of organizations. Instead of attempting to organize the full range of CEV services in a coherent system-wide strategy, micro-collaboratives could be built to meet CEV needs in specific areas. For example, the Safe Start CEV super-system is likely to incorporate organizations that offer services designed to meet the health needs of CEV. By examining the network of organizations that have relationships with a key CEV system health services provider, such as the DOH Clinics, a micro-

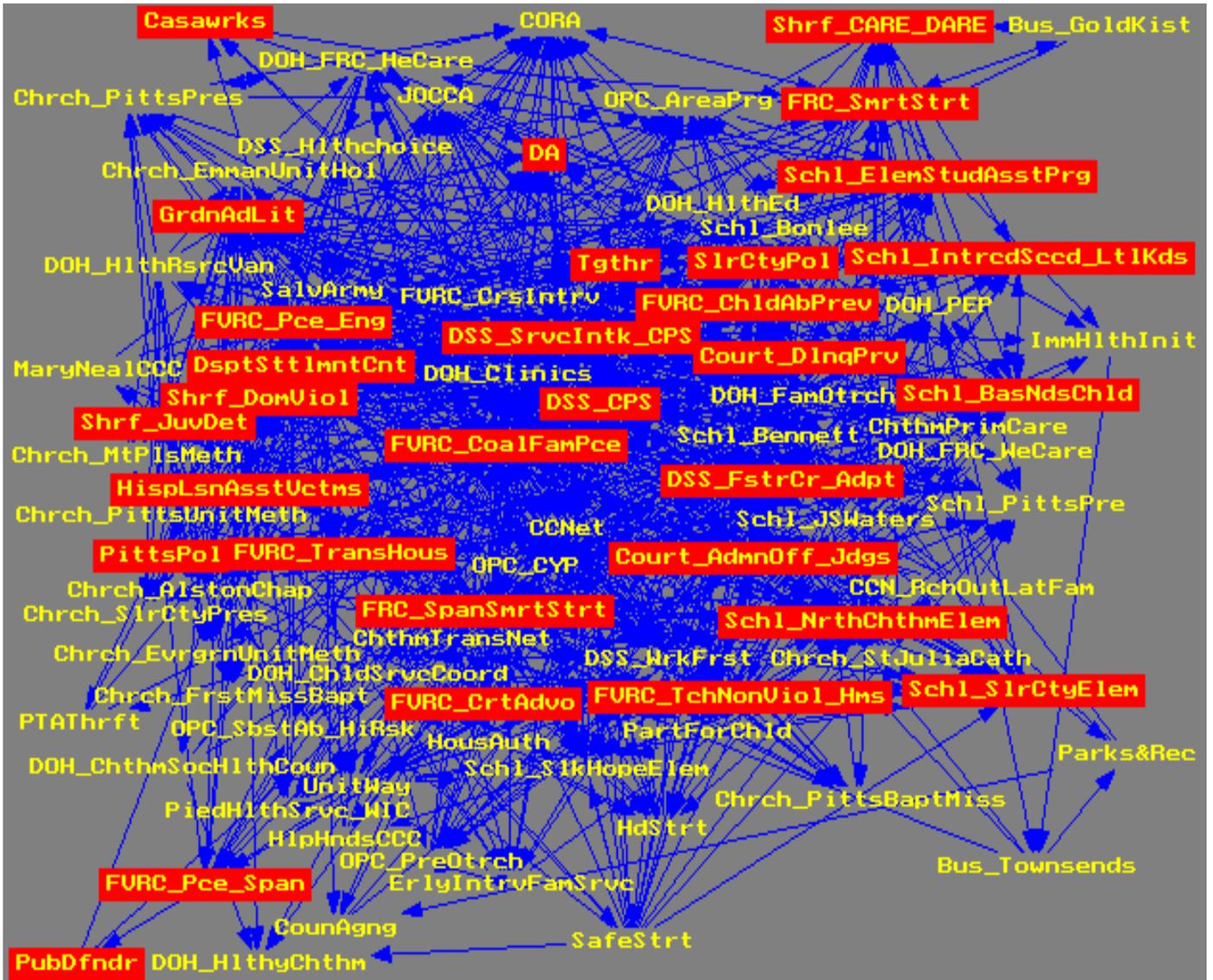
collaborative of health related organizations could be organized around the issues of identifying the health needs of CEV and developing a coordinated micro-system to meet those needs. Similar micro-collaboratives could be built around the developmental and mental health needs of CEV, CEV parent education, comprehensive CEV assessment, law enforcement issues such as professional crisis support during police calls, and judicial issues such as supervised visitation.

Of course, all collaborative efforts should work towards institutionalizing their successful outcomes with formal inter-organizational protocols. In fact, a collaboration strategy considered by the Institute was to have the Initiative encourage the development of CEV protocols between pairs of core organizations that already have formal protocols in place. To this end the Institute asked the key informants of the core organizations to identify their organization's working relationships with other core organizations that are governed by formal written protocols. Graph 4 depicts the network of core organizations that report a working relationship with another core organization that is institutionalized in a formal protocol.

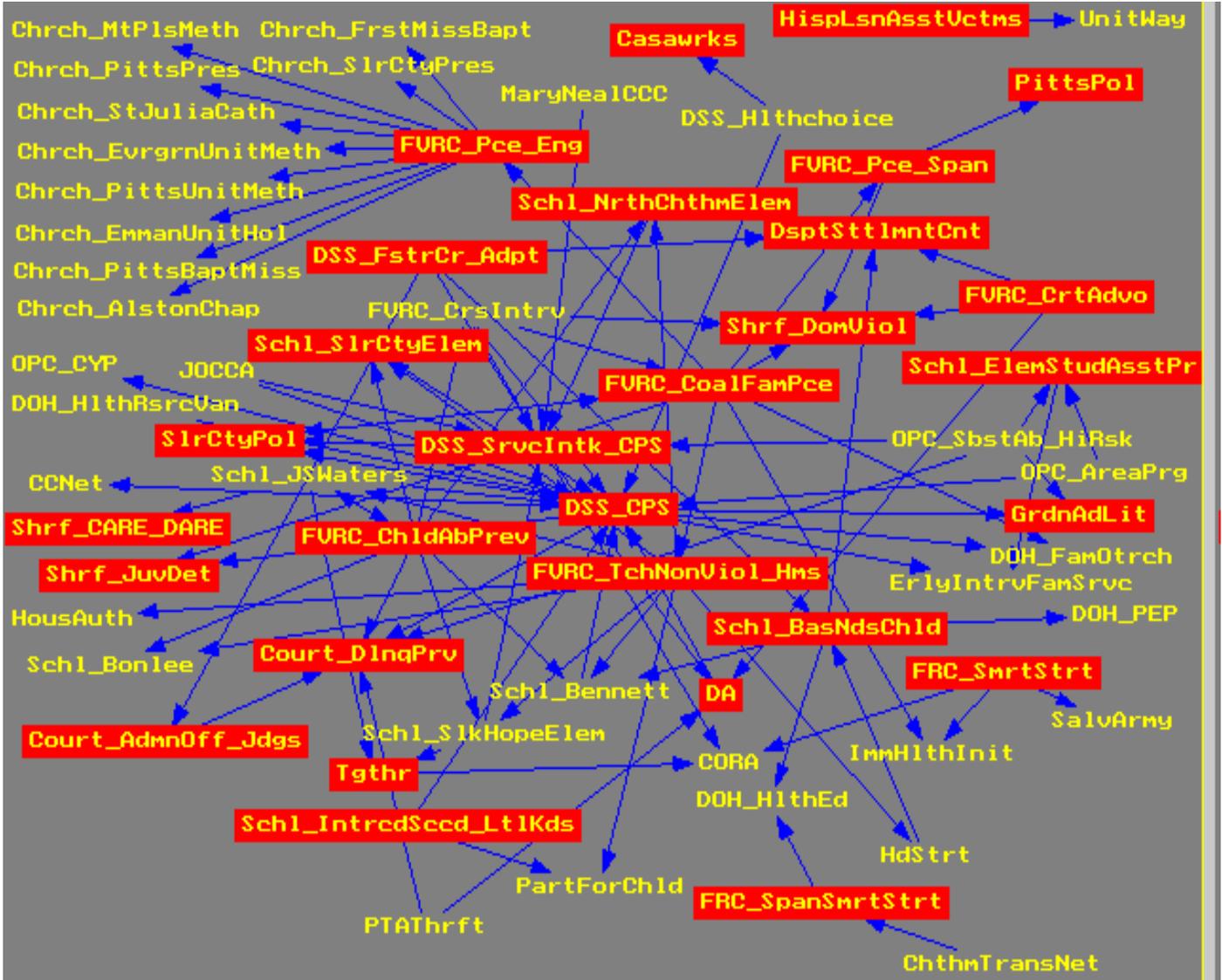
(See Graph 4)

What is interesting about the Graph 4 is that it depicts a network built almost completely around unidirectional relationships. Only the FVRC/Coalition for Family Peace with the Siler City Police dyad represents a bi-directional relationship. Formal interagency protocols, if they exist and are in force, should be expressed in the everyday conduct of the inter-organizational relationship, and should at least be known to an organization's key informant. Therefore, where a formal inter-organizational protocol is in force, it should be reflected in a bi-directional working relationship. Since only one of the relationships pictured above is bi-directional, the Institute suspects that it failed to make clear to key informants what definition it wished the informants to apply to "formal written protocol." The Institute suspects that the key informants were operating on the assumption that a formal organizational policy governing the making of referrals was the definition they were to apply. The graph suggests that there may be few formal inter-organizational protocols in force in the existing CEV system.

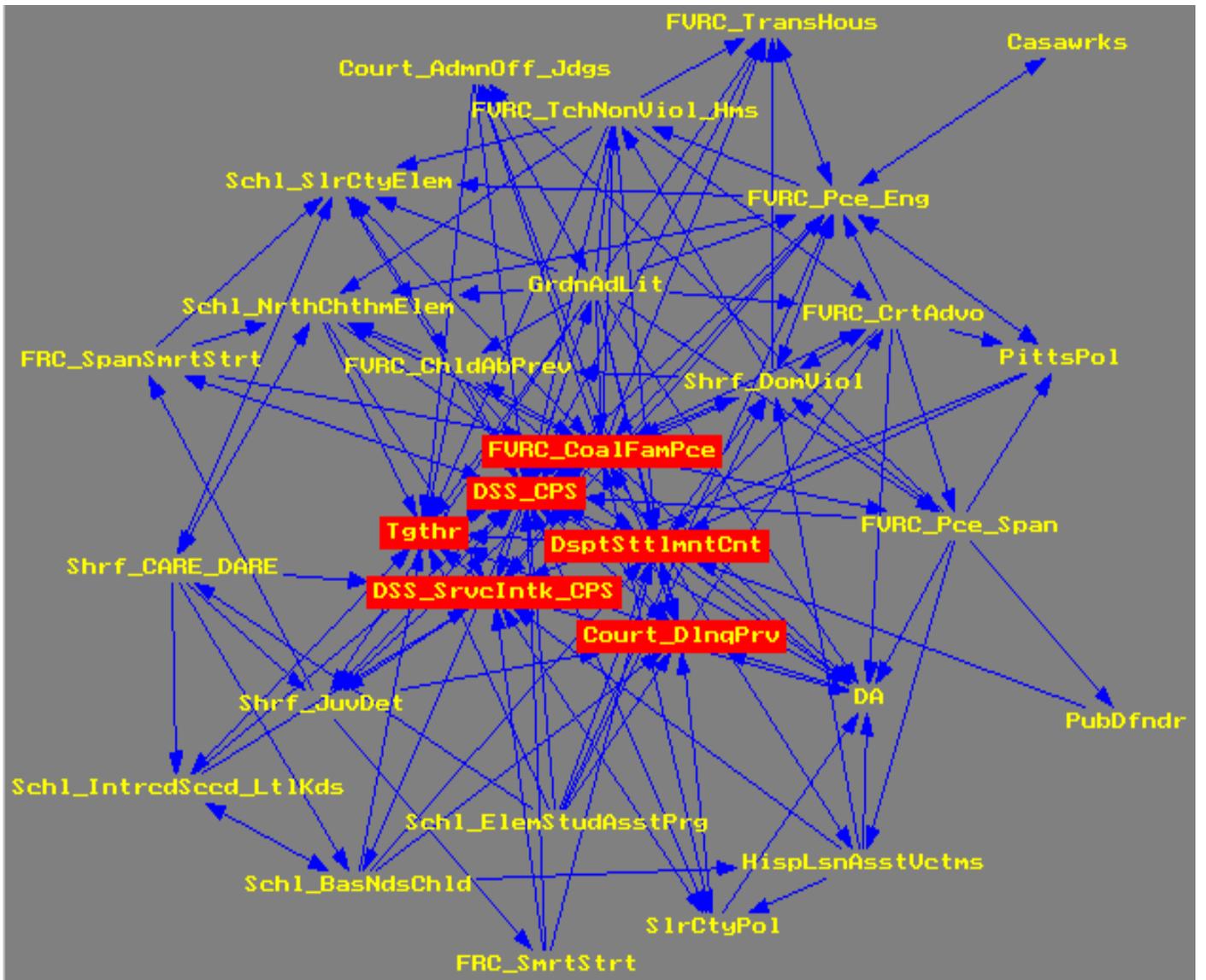
GRAPH 1



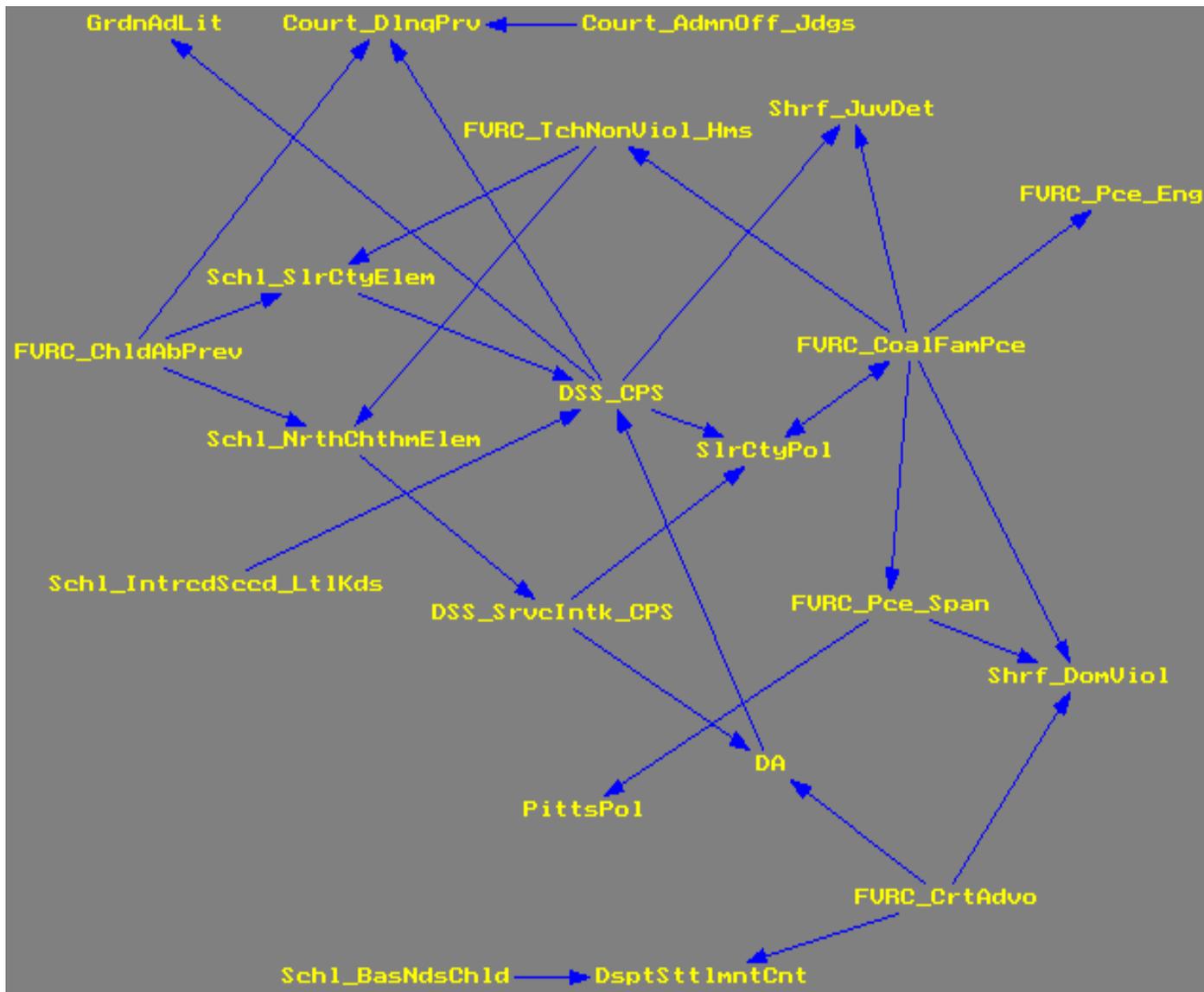
GRAPH 2



GRAPH 3



GRAPH 4



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