



Second Semi-Annual Report on Continuous Quality Improvement Initiatives

Submitted by:

The Implementation and Oversight Advisory Committee (IOAC),
Archdiocese of Boston
M. J. Doherty, PhD, Chair

and

The Office of Child Advocacy, Implementation and Oversight
Deacon Anthony P. Rizzuto, PhD, Director

Dec. 1, 2006 – May 31, 2007

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston

The RCAB Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) schedule identifies four CQI topics as the subjects of this reporting period. These are:

1. Review accomplishments of previous set of tasks, complete if necessary;
2. Create and implement procedures for monitoring and tracking of mandated reporting in parishes and schools;
3. Assess current status of Review Board, its structure and functioning, changes made, etc., per March 2006 recommendations, including the improvement of communications and feedback to complainants and accused concerning case status at milestones; and
4. Implement upper grade safety program in parishes and schools.

The following summary outlines activities and efforts related to each of these topics and lists efforts on the initiatives for the period of Dec. 1, 2006 – May 31, 2007.

1. Review accomplishments of previous set of tasks, complete if necessary

- a. Improve communication with and feedback from parish Child Abuse Prevention Teams: The previous CQI report outlined ongoing efforts to improve communication between the Office of Child Advocacy and the parish CAP Teams, and introduced a plan to conduct a series of five regional meetings to meet with the teams throughout the Archdiocese for this purpose. In order to structure the regional sessions to maximum advantage, it was determined that a strategy meeting should first be held with a group of CAP Team representatives. Calls were made to 3-4 parishes per region issuing an invitation to participate, and the meeting was held on the evening of February 26, 2007. At the meeting, Deacon Rizzuto introduced the idea of the regional sessions, asked for opinions as to how they should be structured, what the teams might want to hear about or get updates on, and what would be most useful to them. Topics suggested for eventual discussion at the regional sessions included how CAP Team functioning has evolved over the past several years; current roles and responsibilities; lines of communication between CAP Teams, pastors and congregations, and between CAP Teams and the Office of Child Advocacy; the level and quality of support services from the Archdiocese and from civil authorities (Police, DSS, etc.); the sustainability of the services CAP Teams represent to the parishes and schools; areas of success, and areas in need of improvement. The first CAP Team regional meetings are being planned for June 2007.
- b. Complete implementation of personal safety curriculum in parish religious education programs: As reported in the previous CQI update, the Office of Child Advocacy signed a contract in July 2006 with the MA Children's Trust Fund for a full time Child Abuse Prevention Specialist. Her primary job has been to personally contact each of the parishes and provide whatever support, technical assistance, or training is necessary to help them comply with the safe environment training requirement for children in parish religious education programs.

The Gavin Group, an independent firm retained by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), completed a full, independent audit of the Archdiocese's compliance with the provisions of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young

People in November 2006. The audit found that by December 31, 2006, the Archdiocese was in compliance with the Charter in all categories.

The parishes that still need to implement a safe environment training program in religious education (CCD) will be offered individual support services by the Office of Child Advocacy and the Child Abuse Prevention Specialist to define and overcome the specific issues preventing full implementation. We are projecting full compliance in the remaining parishes by the end of CY07.

- c. Assess the pilot program results for the safety curriculum for upper grade children in parishes and schools: The results of the pilot program were analyzed and reported in their entirety in the previous CQI update (November 30, 2006). An update on program implementation is below.

2. Create and implement procedures for monitoring and tracking of mandated reporting in parishes and schools

In July 2006, as in previous years, the Office of Child Advocacy sent a letter to all pastors, pastoral staffs, CAP Teams, religious education leaders and principals about mandated reporting. Among other things, the letter (also publicly posted on the RCAB website) reaffirmed that anyone who has a reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected must immediately make an oral report to the Department of Social Services followed by a written (51A) report within 48 hours. The letter also redirected the reporting of all child abuse and neglect complaints involving RCAB clergy, employees and volunteers from the Secretary for Ministerial Personnel to the Office of the Special Assistant to the Cardinal, along with phone and fax information.

As part of its initiative to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of its efforts to protect children, the Archdiocese will also collect more complete data on the nature and types of all the child abuse and neglect reports being filed with the Department of Social Services by the parishes and schools. This effort will not just be limited to clergy, parish/school employees or volunteers. A new requirement was established that directed any person who has filed a 51A report with the Department of Social Services to also mail or fax a copy of the report to the Special Assistant to the Cardinal for statistical data purposes.

Finally, a comprehensive questionnaire was developed and sent in 2006 to all Catholic schools and parishes that, in addition to questions about staff and volunteers' safe environment training and program implementation, asked whether any 51A Reports had been filed. For any such reports, information was requested on the age and gender of the children involved, the nature of the incident and the individuals involved, whether the child self-disclosed the alleged abuse or if an adult suspected or observed the abuse, and if the contact was made to the Department of Social Services in the appropriate timeframes.

Since there is no baseline data concerning 51A reports from the years prior to implementation of the education and training programs (2002), we are not aware of whether the numbers being collected represent an increase or decrease in abuse and neglect reporting throughout the Archdiocese. The Office of Child Advocacy will continue to collect reporting numbers each

year so that we can better understand and analyze reporting trends. Questionnaires for the 2006-2007 academic year will be sent to all Pastors, Principals and Religious Education Directors in June 2007.

3. Assess current status of Review Board, its structure and functioning, changes made, etc., per March 2006 recommendations, including the improvement of communications and feedback to complainants and accused concerning case status at milestones

The Review Board is a confidential consultative body of nine persons that, among its other duties, advises the Cardinal in the assessment of complaints of child abuse and in his determination of the suitability of an accused cleric for ministry. In March 2006, the Review Board and the IOAC completed an extensive 2-year review of the Archdiocese's 2003 *Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children* and made a series of recommendations for revision – some of which concerned the Review Board. The document, entitled “Children First – A Two-Year Assessment of the Implementation of *Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children* (July, 2003)” was posted on the RCAB website on April 7, 2006 and may be reviewed at this address: (<http://rcab.org/ChildAdvocacy/ChildrenFirstPolicyAssessment-060407.pdf>).

The Cardinal has taken the *Children First* report under advisement and will issue a response after fully vetting the recommendations. Commenting on the current status of the Review Board with respect to those recommendations is currently premature. The ways in which the specific recommendations pertaining to the functioning of the Review Board are implemented will be addressed in the next CQI report.

4. Implement upper grade safety program in parishes and schools

As reported previously, the Archdiocese’s plans to expand safe environment training for children called for the establishment of personal safety and abuse prevention training for children in the middle school grades (4-8). A program called “Keeping Children Safe” was designed by a committee of Catholic school principals, teachers, and religious educators, and was piloted successfully last year in more than a dozen schools and parish religious education programs. The curriculum includes age appropriate education in areas such as a review of the safety rules that were discussed in the lower grade curriculum, an increased emphasis on ability to judge risks, a discussion of peer pressure, babysitting and appropriate touch, and Internet/online safety (as this age group may have more unmonitored use of Internet).

After the pilot program was completed, 475 curriculum kits were printed and assembled, and almost 900 teachers and religious educators (representing over 90% of the parishes and schools) were trained in this curriculum and implementation began. To date, 143 parishes and 63 Catholic schools have submitted implementation plans indicating either that the Keeping Children Safe program has already begun or will be implemented during the next academic year.

As mentioned in Section 2 above, safe environment compliance questionnaires for the 2006-2007 academic year will be sent to all pastors, principals and religious education directors in June 2007. The questionnaires were revised to include implementation questions (frequency of training, format, children’s/parents’/teachers’ reactions, etc.) about the Keeping Children Safe curriculum. More complete data will be available in the next CQI report.

Next CQI report due November 30, 2007.