

Key Findings: Fidelity

- PHCs are implemented with fidelity
- **98%** occur prior to/same day as Show Cause Hearing
- Mothers and Fathers were present in majority of PHCs
- High levels of participation of both parents
- Substantive discussion of visitation, placement, and services

Montana PHC Study

Evaluation of Montana Pre-Hearing Conference Pilot Project

Introduction. Montana implemented a pre-hearing conference (PHC) pilot in June of 2015. Three sites have actively been implementing the pilot since then (Gallatin, Flathead, and Lewis & Clark) with other sites attempting implementation as well.

What is PHC? A PHC is a facilitated conversation among parties that occurs prior to the initial Show Cause Hearing. The conversation focuses on placement, visitation, and services. **The goal is to establish a mutual understanding of what is in the best interest of the children, and to begin working as a team toward the reunification of the family.**

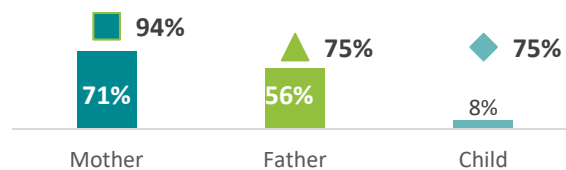


Study Method. Data were collected from multiple sources to examine fidelity of PHC implementation and relationship of PHC to reunification, time to effective resolution, and increasing buy-in from participants. These sources included a *PHC Debrief Tool* and Case File Review.

What do PHC Hearings Look Like?

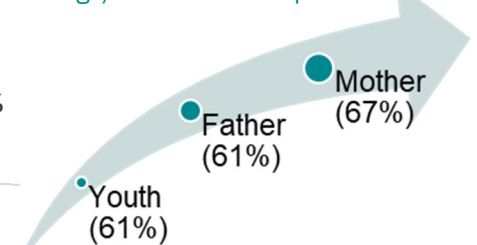
PHCs were held, on average, 1 day before the Show Cause Hearing. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of PHCs were held prior to/or on the same day as the Show Cause Hearing

Percentage of Time Parents, Youth and Respective Attorneys Were Present at PHCs



*Bars represent parents and youth percentage, markers represent attorneys

Percentage of Time Parents and Youth Had High/Excellent Participation in PHC at PHCs



Percentage of PHCs that Substantive Discussion of Key Topics Occurred



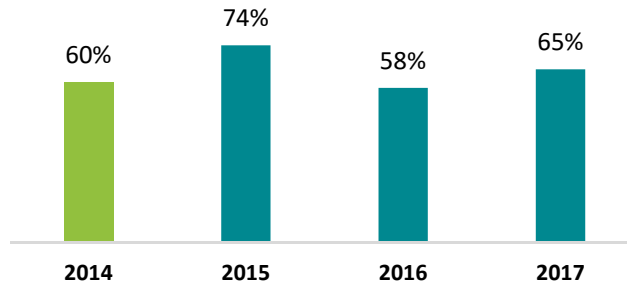
Key Findings: Outcomes

- Reunification rates increased significantly for the first year of the pilot
- Time to effective resolution decreased post-implementation of PHC
- Treatment plans were completed faster after PHC
- Parent’s presence and participation at the PHC significantly predicted reunification

How are PHCs Related to Reunification?

During the first year of implementation (2015), the PHC cases had significantly higher reunification rates (74% versus 60%) when compared to cases with no PHC. When comparing over time and subsequent years, the difference was no longer statistically significant.

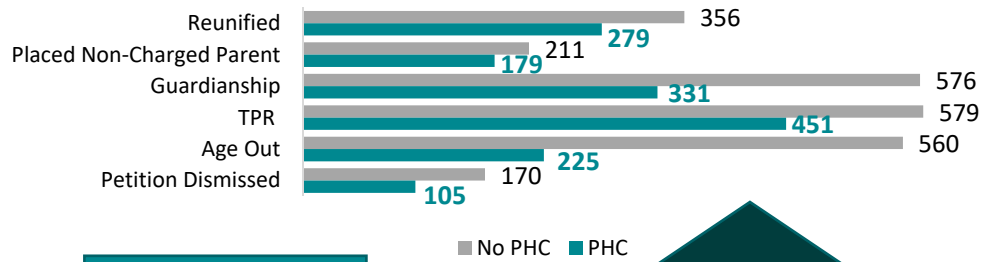
Percentage of Cases that Reunified



How are PHCs Related to Time to Effective Resolution?

There was a *statistically significant* difference in time to effective resolution when comparing cases with a PHC to those without (pre-implementation). This was true for all outcomes. On average (across outcomes), PHC cases reached effective resolution **51** days faster than non-PHC cases (409 vs 358).

Average Days to Specific Outcomes



Time from Filing to Treatment Plan decreased from **116** to **82** days post- PHC

Both the **presence** and the **participation** of parents at PHC significantly predicted increased likelihood of **Reunification**

Overall, the data suggest that PHCs are being implemented with fidelity and may be related to reunification and time to permanency.