

Community Advisory Board  
December 8, 2009

Attendees

Mitchell Rock	Kim Pepper
Lisa DiStefano	Frank Farrera
Rebecca Richmond	Stephanie Guiswite
Barbara Riley	Alison McGonigal
Susan Burns	Ken Arnold
Angela Stancil	Darryl Dawson
Chandlee Kuhn	Sheila Boyer
Joni Silverstein	Keith Zirkle
Barbara Crowell	

The meeting began at 10:05 a.m.

**Welcome and Introductions**

In the absence of Aimee McFarlan, Chair, Mitch Rock led the meeting.

Introductions were completed and the minutes from the October 5 meeting were approved as written.

**Gun Court**

Chief Judge Kuhn gave an overview of the Gun Court. She reported that the Gun Court has been very successful because of the cooperation and support from the PD's Office, AG's Office, and Defense Bar. Chief Judge said that the partnership with Jim Adams has been exceptionally positive and has allowed cases to be resolved within 10 days. She said Jim is giving the youth an option.

They can stay in Family Court and serve their time in Ferris or Glen Mills. Alternatively, they can go up to Superior Court, wait in detention for 6-8 months, and possibly become an adult offender. Youth are choosing to stay in Family Court. Chief Judge feels the youth are receiving more fair treatment through this process.

Chief Judge gave a case example of a youth who took his BB gun to school in his book bag because he was going to his cousin's house after school to shoot cans with him. The youth thought by taking the gun with him it would save his mom time after school by not having to go home to retrieve the gun. The prosecutors in this case pled the charge down to Probation Before Judgment, which is what it should be. She also feels that this process has contributed to the record low detention populations. Mitch Rock reported that the cases going to Superior Court are staying. Chief Judge said there are currently only two problem cases. Alison McGonigal said the Superior Court population is about the same but they are the right kids. Moreover, because they are the right kids, it

has reduced the case processing time in Superior Court. The youth are moving faster through the system.

There is \$300,000 available through JJAG for Gun Court. DYRS, Family Court, PD's Office, and AG's Office are submitting proposals. DYRS will propose to hire two casual seasonal staff to add adjunct support to the Serious Juvenile Offender Program (SJO). Alison said we would also receive ankle bracelets. She said we are in the process of restructuring the services provided by SJO and looking at how we will supervise these youth in the community.

Chief Judge Kuhn reported that the next specialized court being reviewed would be for youth with inappropriate sexual behaviors. She has to put the process together and solicit support from the PD's Office, AG's Office, and Defense Bar. She feels that once it is developed it will be more substantial than the Gun Court.

### **Facility Reviews and Assessments**

Darryl Dawson leads a team of reviewers to conduct internal reviews of our secure care facilities. Stevenson House is the final facility needing review for 2009.

The NCCDC review found that there are many policies and procedures in need of review and updating. NCCDC has a policy committee working on updating their entire policy manual. Another area of improvement is documentation. Throughout the review, NCCDC staff were able to acknowledge current process and practice but could not provide documentation. Mitch Rock and his management team have developed an improvement plan, which address these areas of concern. Mitch said one important finding was that staff and youth alike feel safe in detention. He said the tool talks about treatment in detention. He said treatment does not usually occur in a detention facility, however, through the review process, they found that NCCDC does provide many services to the youth and families.

Barbara Riley said she attended Career Night at NCCDC. She said she was able to engage with all the youth because the population is low. She was impressed by the youth and staff. She said parents attended and were asking her for extra information for other siblings. She said it was great.

Judge Crowell said Independent Living has refused to go into the detention center. She thinks that we need to get this to happen specifically for the older youth. She said it should be in all of our facilities. She also suggested that DYRS add the STEPS program in our facilities. She said the youth really need this. Alison said Shirley Roberts, DFS, gave a presentation at a DYRS Senior Staff meeting. Our plan is to implement at least a model of STEPS in our facilities.

Alison said the Grace/Snowden Cottages review is new. The tool is different from the tool used for detention. She said it was developed based on feedback from community partners and DYRS goals. Several areas will be ongoing. The primary focus areas on the improvement plan include case management and programming, staffing, environment, clinical, and medical. A focus will also be placed on establishing a target population and standard length of stay. Alison said the Department is opening a Cottage School in the Cleveland White Building. It will open in January, which will allow more space in the cottages. Barbara Riley asked if we were going to mix the boys and girls in the new school. Yes, the youth will attend school together. Barbara was happy to hear this as it will allow normalization.

### **Turning Point – Ferris School Drug and Alcohol Program**

Frank Farrera gave a presentation on Turning Point. Turning Point is a fully licensed residential drug and alcohol treatment program for qualified residents of Ferris School and Mowlds Cottage. The program was implemented in 1999 providing service to 10 residents. In 2008, the program provided service to 110 residents. It was originally funded through an RSAT grant and became fully licensed by DSAMH in 2004.

At least 65% of our residents come from homes that have experienced substance abuse issues and high levels of marital and family conflict and/or family violence. All residents receive an assessment. The tool used is Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (GAINS). The residents are referred to the program by the Treatment Team. The average treatment group is 18 weeks. At the end of the 18 weeks, the youth will transition from Ferris School to Mowlds Cottage. Turning Point continues but with a different focus – Relapse and Relapse Prevention. Youth develop personal relapse prevention plans and take them home with them. An Aftercare Meeting is held in which the resident and family participate. In this meeting, an aftercare plan is developed to include a referral for outpatient drug and alcohol counseling once in the community.

In January 2009, DSAMH issued a new set of standards under which we are licensed as a residential drug and alcohol program. The standards include but are not limited to:

- Establish an Advisory Board with authority and oversight of the Turning Point Program.
- Meet a minimum of once per year (suggesting four per year).
- Provide minutes of meeting.
- Review of personnel policies.
- Review of operation procedures.
- Review staff training and development.
- Oversight of a quality assurance plan.

Frank asked for this committee's support in meeting these requirements. Barbara Riley said she would take this information back to Martha Gregor who oversees the statewide Drug Court. She said she works with someone who has a lot of experience with youth but is currently working with adults. Judge Crowell said Frank should seek support from CMH since they have the experts. Mitch said that the detention centers have Substance Abuse Counselors who would be willing to participate on a committee. Dr. Richmond, Psychologist at NCCDC, said she would participate. Judge Crowell said their committee should include youth who have been in the program and invite families. Susan Burns said Office of Case Management provides quality assurance for the Department and are available to assist if needed.

Mitch invited Frank to the February meeting for follow-up.

### **Mentoring Subcommittee**

Mitch reported that a Mentoring Subcommittee was formed from our group. The Chair, Shonna Hillard, no longer works for the agency she represented and is no longer participating on the subcommittee. As a result, the subcommittee has not met. However, there two mentoring grants were awarded to community partners and will provide service to DYRS youth. One grant was awarded to Goodwill and the other was awarded to Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Lisa DiStefano reported that the grant with Big Brothers Big Sisters would be a joint project with YMCA, Delaware Center for Justice and Delaware Girls Initiative. There have been a few meetings held. Lisa said they want this grant to provide services to youth in Grace, Snowden, Mowlds and Ferris. They will start with the youth who have 90 days left at Ferris. The youth will participate in a six-week group that will include:

- Violence Prevention
- Communication Skills
- Stress Management
- Employment Skills Development
- Basic Financial Management
- Victim Sensitivity

Lisa said Big Brothers Big Sisters will be soliciting mentor volunteers to work with our youth. Judge Crowell suggested a Mentor Support Group be established to help the mentors. She said the hardest part of the volunteer programs is keeping the commitment from the adult volunteer. Lisa said the group recognizes that and they will have a successful volunteer talk to them about the importance of their commitment.

### **Division Update**

Darryl reported that the Department's new theme is "Working Better Together". He said during this legislative session, the Department is proposing the following:

- OPEI to join CMH. The new Division name would be the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health.
- DFS and YRS training units to move under the Division of Management Support Services.
- All contract units to move under the Division of Management Support Services.
- Move some case management staff to other divisions.

There will be subcommittee updates regarding the Community Services Restructuring Plan at the December 15 meeting.

The Department has to send 5% and 10% budget cut proposals. DYRS will have to decrease our budget by \$2.9 million or 4.8 million. The majority of the reductions will be in our contractual services. We will continue to manage the best we can. Hopefully in the near future, we will have services in Delaware for ISB youth, which will save us a lot of money.

Carlyse has collaborated with Myrna Bair to provide leadership training to DYRS staff. We received a leadership grant for \$10,000 from CJC for supervisors and managers; they will attend workshops with Sen. Bair. This is scheduled to begin in February and run through the summer. The contract is currently being developed.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

*Next meeting is February 1st at 10:00 a.m.*

*Mission: To support public safety and positive change of children, families, and communities through guidance, education, and empowerment.*