

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Department of Health and Human Services
INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: June 17, 2013

TO: Supervisor Peggy Romo-West, Chairwoman, Health & Human Needs Committee

FROM: Héctor Colón, Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Prepared by B. Thomas Wanta, Administrator/Chief Intake Officer – DCSD

SUBJECT: Informational Report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, Regarding Use of the Juvenile Detention Facility as a Short-Term Dispositional Placement as Allowed by State Statutes

Issue

In July 2012, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors authorized the implementation of a short-term secure placement program within the Milwaukee County Secure Detention Center - juvenile facility as a dispositional placement option for the circuit courts. This report provides a status update regarding the implementation of this program, known as the Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP).

Background

The 2011 – 2013 State Budget (Act 32) contains statutory language changes that allow juvenile courts the ability to place a youth in a local secure detention facility for a period of up to 180 days, if authorized by a county board of supervisors. In July 2012, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution (File No. 12-564) approving the use of the Secure Detention Center as a post-dispositional placement for a period not to exceed 180 days pursuant to Wisconsin State statute 938.06(5).

The Department of Health and Human Services, Delinquency and Court Services Division (DCSD), has since proceeded with implementation of the Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP) as an alternative to State Juvenile Corrections. MCAP provides an opportunity for certain youth to remain close to home instead of being sent to the Juvenile Correctional Institution located in Irma, WI, a 4-hour drive from Milwaukee. This initiative has the potential to save funds in the future by avoiding costly State Corrections placements. The division anticipates a reduction in the cost of Juvenile Correctional Institution placements by \$180,000 in 2013 compared to 2011.

Discussion

The target group is youth (males) who are at risk for State Juvenile Corrections placement. This includes youth currently on court ordered supervision that are at risk for State Juvenile Corrections placement due to violating the conditions of court-ordered supervision or because of a new offense. Youth not currently under supervision who are at risk for State Juvenile

Corrections placement for a pending offense may also be considered.

Youth are initially placed in the Secure Detention Center in the MCAP dedicated pod for up to 5 months followed by a period of aftercare in the community under probation supervision. The youth and his parent/guardian are asked to sign the MCAP agreement consenting to the program requirements.

A Human Service Worker Supervisor has been assigned to oversee the operation of this program. Meetings take place two times a month to discuss youth's progress in the program.

The key components of the MCAP program are as follows:

- **Education** – Wauwatosa Public Schools provide classes in reading, English, math, social studies, science, physical education/health and art. Credit recovery is available to certain participants through completing virtual courses on the computer. These courses, if not completed, may be continued upon release at Running Rebels Community Organization. Credits earned are transferable to the child's local school district. The school provides weekly progress reports to the probation officer.
- **Juvenile Cognitive Intervention Programming (JCIP)** – Running Rebels Community Organization runs groups each week-day morning for one hour in the secure detention facility. JCIP is continued through Running Rebels in the community upon the youth's release. These groups are designed to help youth change their thought process in order to make better choices.
- **Targeted Monitoring** – Participants are assigned to a monitor from Running Rebels Community Organization. The monitor provides weekly reports to the probation officer.
- **Family Counseling** – All MCAP participants are expected to attend weekly counseling sessions using providers in the Children's Court Services Network. These sessions include parents/guardians when possible.
- **AODA Education and Counseling** - Alcohol and drug abuse counseling is provided monthly by La Causa, Inc. to help participants understand the effects of substance abuse.
- **Electronic Monitoring** – GPS monitoring is required during home passes (month four) and upon initial release to the community.

- **72-Hour Hold** – Youth on aftercare status are subject to holds in secure detention for investigation of any alleged violations of the rules of their supervision.

So far, 21 youth have been ordered in to the MCAP program. Currently, 12 youth have successfully completed phases one and two of the program in secure detention without any instances of major misconduct (fights, aggressive behavior, etc.). Of those twelve youth who were transitioned into the community (phase three), one participant failed to comply with phase three monitoring, resulting in his placement at Lincoln Hills School (DOC).

A strong foundation has been laid by all participating entities. The program is supported by intense ongoing communication between representatives of DCSD, judges, Wauwatosa Public Schools, Milwaukee Public Schools and Running Rebels Community Organization. Though each organization plays a specific role in the program, there has been a focus on educating each other about the programs and outcomes related to this service, which has benefited all participants.

To date, MCAP has produced some very positive indicators, which demonstrates that the program will likely be successful once fully implemented. Some strong points from the first nine months of implementation are:

- Improved behavior in the secure detention environment
- Improved cognition as characterized by:
 - Increased ownership of negative behaviors
 - Improved ability to process negative behaviors
 - More honest reporting of all behaviors
 - Youth initiated use of new skills
 - Increased ability to identify possible choices of behavior in high risk situations
 - A more developed understanding of the relationship between beliefs, behaviors and consequences
- Improved articulation, self-advocacy and engagement between the youth and the judge in court
- Increased positive interaction between judges and youth
- Greater compliance with outside therapy (new disclosures, increased progress, voluntary participation)
- Ability to recognize and avoid high risk situations
- Increased academic focus
 - Reading 40 books while in secure detention
 - Increased confidence in the academic arena
 - Increased focus on grades and school behavior
- 50% of youth in the community are employed

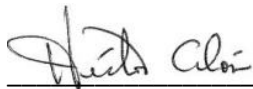
Much of the data cannot be fully evaluated until the first cohort of youth has completed the full 12 month program and subsequent years of evaluation of recidivism. However, there are no

indicators that lead DCSD to believe that the success of youth, as we have defined it at this time, will decrease in the future. As the program is fully implemented, all parties involved in MCAP will become more familiar with their roles and responsibilities and DCSD believes that the program will be very successful. Steps have already been taken by all partners to improve the quality of the service that they provide.

Although there is still much work to be done, there is clearly a great foundation to justify continued effort. DCSD continues to monitor implementation of the program and will make adjustments as necessary. Additional program components are being explored as needs are identified for future implementation.

Recommendation

This is an informational report. No action is necessary.



Héctor Colón, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

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