

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

DATE: February 21, 2014

TO: 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 the Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP)

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 court the ability to place 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 Delinquency and Court Services Division (DCSD) has since proceeded with implementation of 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 four-hour drive from Milwaukee. This initiative has the potential to save funds in the future by avoiding costly State Corrections placements.

Discussion

The MCAP program, in its current design, targets the needs of the most chronically delinquent, and at risk youth involved in the Juvenile Justice System. The central component guiding the development of the program and redefining compliance has been the Juvenile Cognitive Intervention Program (JCIP). JCIP is a three-phase, evidence-based core treatment program for juvenile offenders. In a cognitive behavioral program, individuals examine the effects of their thoughts (cognitions) on their behaviors and work to modify problem behaviors by changing the thinking that supports those behaviors with the ultimate goal of reducing recidivism. The

material in phase I and II are optimal for youth being served in a detention center setting. Phase III is ideal for a youth that has transitioned into the community. Great steps have been taken to eliminate many of the barriers that are traditionally presented when serving our highest risk juvenile population. A strong foundation has been laid by all participating entities. The program is supported by intense ongoing and developing communication between representatives of Delinquency Services, Judges, Wauwatosa Schools, Milwaukee Public School, and Running Rebels Community Organization. Though each of entity holds a special role, great pains have been taken to educate each other across traditional communication lines.

The initial launch plan for the MCAP program was particularly ambitious. And although approximately 90 percent of those implementation benchmarks were achieved, the desire to create a highly responsive model called for significant and real-time enhancements of the program's design in order to reach the desired performance goals. For that reason, the greatest successes of the MCAP program will not, at this time, be seen in the completion numbers, but the overall impact the program has had on the lives of the participants, and the expanse of successes that have been made possible through its careful and diligent design. In order to understand the final numbers, the subsequent phases of the program have been broken down to highlight the impact and performance of the model.

Phase I: Referral and Secure Detention (Choices)

The referral process was reviewed between the six and nine month stage of implementation. The original target group was the chronically non-compliant and those most advanced, and often accomplished, in their delinquent behavior. About 75 percent of the early referrals were 16 ½ plus years old with five plus years in the juvenile justice system. This population has a very high rate of severe family dysfunction and extremely low rate of positive parental involvement, which serves as a challenge to successful transition into the community.

This phase is anchored by a core of Secure Detention staff dedicated to creating a stable environment, learning the core principles of JCIP, adhering to consistent and standard enforcement of the facility rules, and an even delivery of consequences and emotional support. This phase is supported by a newly trained group of youth advocates from Running Rebels Community Organization (RRCO) who visit the youth an average of four to five days a week, spending an average of 45 minutes per visit with youth on the MCAP Pod, and weekly contact with the families.

A dedicated team of DCSD Human Service Workers who have volunteered to support the development of the program, have been trained on JCIP and other program components, and meet with the youth once a week. The Human Service Workers focus on supporting the youth's progression through the program, and maintaining the compliance directives issued by the Judiciary. The school component, online credit recovery, is implemented at this stage, and is supported by a communication tool that connects daily school performance to the core principles being taught in Phase I of the JCIP curriculum. Phase I also includes individual therapy sessions for all youth, and AODA counseling for specific youth, both with targeted providers

selected from the Children's Court Services Network (CCSN). This phase has yielded the following universal positive results:

- Improved behavior in the secure detention environment
 - Only one incident of physical altercation between participating youth
- Stronger relationship building between youth and detention staff, Human Service Workers, RRCO Advocates, therapists and teachers.
- Improved school behavior and academic output, as evidenced by
 - Completed daily class work and homework
 - Improved reading and math scores
 - Increased time on task
 - Increased academic awareness(weekly report cards)
- Goal setting
- Increased individualization*

Phase I Improvements

New Referral Criteria:

The new criteria have identified the following characteristics as not appropriate for placement in the MCAP program:

- Advanced mental health issues coupled with cognitive limitations
- Advanced mental health issues-not yet stabilized
- Co-actors with extensive history cannot be placed on the same MCAP unit*. The intense cognitive restructuring activities reinforces the negative bond between the co-actors, and actually raises cognitive distortion in those that demonstrate more "follower" behaviors
- Focus on youth with non-compliance issues that have been criminalized, not youth who have committed egregious offenses, but are looking to avoid a long term placement in corrections

Parental Involvement:

Parental involvement for youth placed in the MCAP program needed to be increased dramatically. It was found that introducing a youth back into the home environment was often met with unsympathetic adults, or adults who refused to believe that change was even possible for the youth. In these cases, the parent either convinced the youth that change was impossible, so the youth gave up, or the parent influenced the behavior by supporting the youth's "old" way of thinking, and encouraging a return to "normal". New criteria for parent involvement include:

- Weekly contact with the RRCO Advocate
- A family Program Orientation in the home within 2 weeks of the youth's placement in the MCAP program
- The development of a parent component to educate the family on the process of "change" that is initiated in the MCAP program, how to support (or at least not sabotage) the youth's progress, and how to maximize the many resources provided through the program
- Home visits by RRCO Advocate each month prior to the youth earning home passes

Phase II: Secure Detention and Community Transition (Changes)

Phase II continues with moving to the second stage of the JCIP curriculum (Changes). This phase has gone through a great deal of development, as it was seen as weak in supporting the community transition. Youth in this stage begin to have Team Meetings with their parent and any providers of services upon placement in the community. A pass progression of four required visits was initiated between the 120 and 150 day stage of the secure detention placement. Youth were temporarily released to the discharge resource for the purpose of re-acclimating to the environment, and gauging support in the discharge environment. This stage also saw the greatest level of growth in the day to day performance of the youth, and the development of a genuine desire to influence the process of change in their lives. There is no doubt that ALL youth participants were heavily impacted by the MCAP experience, and it clearly has been able to "jump start" the process of change in the mind the youth it has served. These claims are supported by the following:

- 82 percent of all youth who completed phase I & II of the program demonstrated reductions in cognitive distortion (per the How I Think test)
- ALL youth were able to identify the situations in their daily lives that would present the greatest risk for re-offending, and make a plan to address it (with support)
- 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
- In court we have seen improved articulation, self-advocacy, and engagement between the youth and the judge
 - Increased positive interaction between judges and youth
 - Greater compliance in outside therapy (new disclosures, increased progress, voluntary participation)
 - Ability to recognize and avoid high risk situations
 - Increased academic focus
 - Complete 40 novels while in secure detention (all but one has completed this, and the one who didn't, obtained a library card and completed them at home)
 - Developed very strong relationships with RRCO Advocates, and demonstrate a willingness to rely on them for support in difficult situations
 - Improved communication between youth and parents
 - Credits earned through online credit recovery program
 - Continued improved behavior and performance in the academic environment

Phase II Improvements

Improved Pass Procedure:

Youth completing the MCAP program were demonstrating reduced effort and focus at the point of release back into the community, causing a drop off in positive thinking, and behavior at a critical point. A "Petition for Pass" system has been developed where once the youth has completed a satisfactory review with the Judge, and the Human Service Worker has designated the term of the Pass Progression. The youth is required complete a petition requesting a pass based on their behavior for the previous seven day period. The petition outlines the behavioral and program requirements necessary to earn a pass, and is only granted if all criteria are met. The areas include:

- School Behavior & Assignments
- JCIP Classes and Personal Accountability
- Behavior on the pod
- And an optional goal that can be assigned by the Advocate, Human Service Worker or a Juvenile Correctional Officer

Focus and behavior during the pass progression improved significantly in the community and on the Pod after implementation of this process. The process has now been extended to "Petition for Release".

Evaluating & Ordering Transition Services:

Human Service Workers noted the need for connecting and reconnecting youth and families with the necessary services to support community transition. To improve the timing and delivery of services, the DCSD works with the Judiciary to present and order any necessary services at the point of the 120 day review. This provides 60 days for any assessments or other necessary connection processes to take place, and be in place at the point of release.

Phase III: School/Community Placement & Continuation of Services

This has become the “Achilles' heel” of the MCAP progression. The success stories are truly phenomenal successes. However, it is clear that there is room for improvement when it comes to supporting the youth once they are placed in the community. RRCO has revamped the training of its Advocates to respond to the specific needs of the MCAP population, and has managed to see improved results. School placements have been a significant issue, mostly because only 13% of MCAP youth have been able to receive placements that were *not* in alternative schools. The inherent problem presented here, is that we've taken some of our most chronically delinquent youth, placed them on a path to change, and then place them in an environment for 8 hours a day that offers no choice in peer group. Despite this, there are successes to be identified. Extensive lessons have been learned over the past year, and the current program reflects efforts to implement the new systems, and resolve the original issues that have been encountered. Youth in this phase continue to work in Phase III of the JCIP curriculum (Challenges), and are required to process behaviors daily with their Advocates. The positive impact of the MCAP program is evidenced by the following:

- Significant reduction in the use of marijuana in program youth. Almost 100% reported being regular marijuana users at the time of placement. Only 3 youth have recorded urine screens positive for marijuana while on active placement in the community.
- Improved school behavior. Despite placement in alternative environments, the number of referrals and suspensions has been very low for the MCAP population. Most youth have been identified as well behaved, and have requested additional class work and homework to keep themselves “out of trouble”. However, unfortunately, the alternative schools in which youth have been placed following release from detention have not consistently accommodated youths' requests for extra work.
- School attendance has remained above 90% for the entire MCAP population
- Increased enrollment and active participation in outside services. MCAP youth are very receptive to new activities with their advocates, and trying out programs supplemental at RRCO and other agencies. Youth have been enrolled in:
 - RRCO Job Prep
 - GPS Education Partners Work-based Training Program

- SDC After School Activities
 - RRCO Basketball League
 - Pathfinders
 - City On A Hill
 - BUILD Moto-Mentor Program
- Increased job placement. 26% of MCAP youth have been able to find and hold jobs upon release from secure detention
 - Increased contact and participation monitoring programs. Youth in the MCAP program are required to:
 - Submit to Global Position System (GPS) monitoring for certain periods
 - Check in by phone for the duration of their community placement
 - Make their location known to their RRCO Advocate at all times
 - Active community based youth often average as many as 15 contact calls per day, even when being monitored by GPS devices
 - Improved academic performance. 91 % of youth, actively maintained in the community, have maintained passing grades in school
 - Improved behavior in the home
 - Completion of Community Service hours

Phase III Improvements

- An increase in the required number of contacts the RRCO Advocate must make with an MCAP youth, family, or on their behalf- from 20/week plus phone calls, to 25/week plus phone calls
- Monthly check in calls to the family from RRCO Lead Advocate (Supervisor)
- A collaboration with the MPD (Fusion Unit) to add additional community support and responsiveness in the area of accountability
- A clear, outlined progression for involvement at RRCO that extends beyond the term of the court order and into the Aftercare (ATAC) program
- Develop new strategies around employment and vocational education opportunities

The need to shore up the transition through Phase III is undeniable, but the effort is already under way, and increased success is in sight. The completion numbers are detailed below.

A total of 35 youth have been referred to the MCAP program:

- Among these referrals, 19 youth are active in the program, including 11 youth currently in detention and participating in Phase I or II, and 8 youth who are in the community participating in Phase III
- The remaining 16 youth have been discharged for the following reasons:
 - 4 youth successfully completed the program (all three phases)
 - 1 youth was removed due to an improper placement/poor fit for the program and never completed the first phase
 - 1 youth was discharged and placed in Wraparound with a residential treatment center placement due to significant mental health issues, cognitive limitations, and no family involvement
 - 1 youth was discharged as awol from the program
 - 8 youth were discharged for non-compliance and were committed to juvenile corrections (3 of these youth had new offenses during the program). Note that 5 of these 8 youth were long time co-actors from the same “gang” whose behavior was supported by adult criminal activity, and supported/encouraged each other's non-compliant behavior upon return to the community. The extent of this involvement and these relationships was unknown at the time of referral to the program.
 - 1 youth was discharged as unsuccessful because he picked up a new charge in the last two weeks of Phase II and was charged as an adult

It is also worth noting that the majority of youth who did not complete the program were discharged during community phase (Phase III) of the program. Twenty-three youth overall successfully completed the detention phases (Phases I and II).

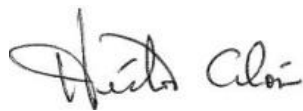
In the third quarter of 2013, the Delinquency and Court Services Division (DCSD) of Milwaukee County conducted surveys for the youth involved with the Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP). These surveys were designed to capture satisfaction levels of the youth and their parents while receiving services in MCAP. The quality and frequency of contacts for the youth and their family, as well as the cultural sensitivity demonstrated by program staff and the perspective of success as a result of program involvement were all areas of assessment with this survey. The results illustrated that 67% were satisfied with the services they received while approximately 24% were somewhat satisfied. Only 9% were dissatisfied with the services they received; however did not request any follow-up from quality assurance staff. About one-third

(36%) of all surveyed requested follow-up from quality assurance staff to discuss additional services and concerns that they may have had; however the majority of the survey results exemplified an overall general satisfaction with the MCAP.

MCAP Satisfaction Survey Results	# (%)
Satisfied	22 (66.7%)
Somewhat Satisfied	8 (24.2%)
Dissatisfied	3 (9.1%)
Total	33 (100.0%)

Recommendation

This is an informational report. No action is necessary.



Héctor Colón, Director
 Department of Health and Human Services

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