

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

**DATE:** August 24, 2017

**TO:** Supervisor Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Jeanne Dorff, Interim Director, Department of Health and Human Services  
*Prepared by: Mark Mertens, Delinquency and Court Services Administrator*

**SUBJECT:** **An informational report from the Interim Director, Department of Health and Human Services, on the implementation of local alternative placements to Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake, expansion of the Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP) and creation of a female specific MCAP program**

**Background**

This report is submitted in response to a request by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors for an update regarding the implementation of local alternative placements to Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake, including a 365-day option, expansion of the Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP) from 22 to 68 beds and implementation of a female specific MCAP program for youth.

**Discussion**

***365-Day Option***

MCAP is currently a 365-day program, beginning when the youth is placed on a court order for one year to participate in the program. Youth begin MCAP in the detention phase. This phase lasts for up to five months. During this phase, youth participate in educational programming on the pod, complete phases one and two of the Juvenile Cognitive Intervention Program (JCIP), participate in AODA education and counseling, restorative justice programming, and individual and family therapy, which continues into the community phase. Upon entering the community phase (lasting the duration of the court order), the youth participate in the Targeting Monitoring program, GPS monitoring, and can be subject to a return to detention for 72 hours for any violations.

Expanding the duration of the detention phase of the program is not recommended for several reasons. First, a longer duration in detention is counter-indicated by the research (see the Pathways to Desistance study summarized here: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/244689.pdf>). The current duration of five months is sufficient for youth to complete all programming that is designed to be delivered in detention, and it is imperative that the youth begin to utilize the skills learned in detention within the supervised conditions of the community phase as soon as possible.

Second, expansion of the detention phase would require the program to abbreviate the community phase of the program. This would have a significant adverse effect on program outcomes. The monitoring, phase three JCIP interventions, mentoring, and family counseling that occurs in the community phase are critical elements that contribute to program effectiveness.

Third, an expansion of the duration of the detention phase would result in as much as a 50 percent reduction in the number of youth that could be served in MCAP each year. It is likely that this would result in a corresponding increase in the number of youth placed at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools.

Finally, expanding the length of the detention phase would lead to overcrowding within the Detention Center, compromising safety in the facility. Increasing the turnover of the 24 beds in the MCAP program by five to seven months would result in an average of 15 to 20 youth remaining in the general population of the Detention Center, waiting for an MCAP bed to open up for them. This would lead to overcrowding and eliminate the possibility of risk classification within the Detention Center thereby compromising safety and putting the Center out of compliance with regulations.

In summary, MCAP is currently operating as a 365-day program designed with a detention and community phase of optimal length for the program components they deliver. Expansion of the detention phase would compromise program effectiveness.

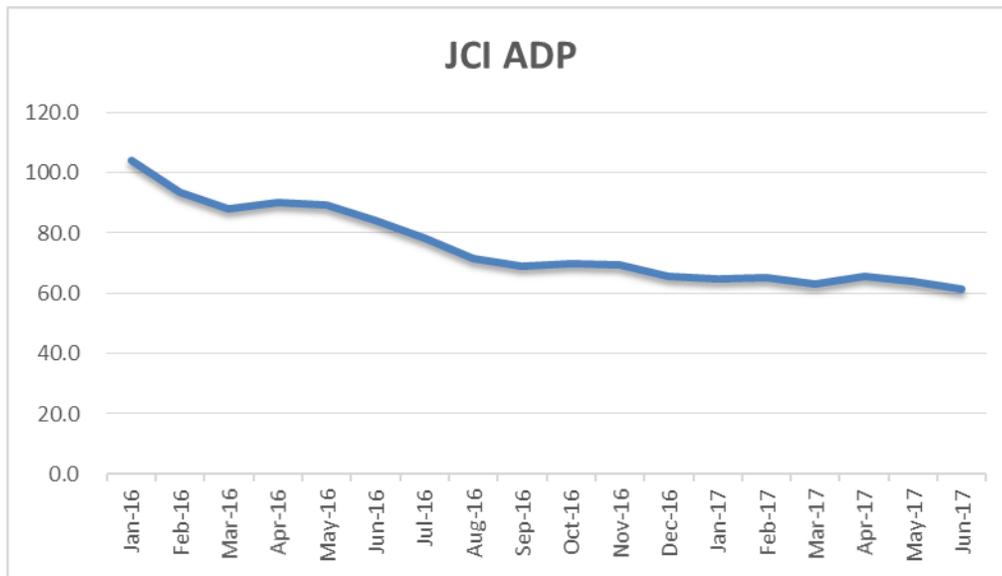
***Expanding the Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP) from 24 to 68 beds***

There is a general consensus that Milwaukee County is in need of more local residential treatment options for high-risk delinquent youth. Currently, the Delinquency and Court Services Division (DCSD) is working to develop a 24-bed, staff secure Type II residential facility within the City of Milwaukee. It is anticipated that this program will be operational by early 2018. DCSD has been working closely with the Children's Court and community stakeholders to assure this program is of optimal size, provides adequate security and supervision, and delivers effective trauma-informed and culturally relevant treatment services to meet the needs of youth by providing a robust local alternative to Lincoln Hills School. DCSD is also working with legislators and state officials to establish the authority to license a secure residential treatment center. These options will provide greater capacity to keep youth close to home.

In light of these efforts and the steep reductions in Milwaukee County juvenile correctional placements since the beginning of 2016, expansion of MCAP from the current 24 beds to 68 beds is not recommended for the following reasons:

1. It is extremely unlikely that a facility exists in Milwaukee County that can be renovated or retrofitted in a cost effective manner to accommodate the need or comply with Wisconsin Chapter DOC 346 – Secure Detention for Juveniles. Efforts by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to explore the Milwaukee County House of Correction and the vacant space at the CATC have been documented in previous board reports (File No. 16-551 and 16-292).

- 2. There is no longer the need for an additional 44-bed MCAP capacity given the reduction in corrections placements and development of alternatives. The current average daily population (ADP) of Milwaukee County youth in Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools (excluding youth in the SJO Program under a state commitment) has fallen from 104 to 61 from January 2016 to June 2017. See the chart below:



It is anticipated that the ADP will continue to decline with the development of alternatives like the Type II staff secure residential treatment program thereby further reducing the need for additional MCAP beds.

Expansion of an additional 12 MCAP beds within the current 120-bed capacity of the Detention Center would be feasible if the average daily population of non-MCAP (general population) youth can be reduced from its current level of approximately 90 youth to 66 youth and if that level can be maintained on a consistent basis. This reduction would allow for continued appropriate youth classification within the facility to maintain safety and security. However, attaining such a significantly lower average of the general population would require concerted efforts by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, DCSD staff and administration, Wraparound, and community providers to significantly expedite case processing and assure an adequate capacity of non-secure placement options. At best, this should be viewed as a long-range goal at this point.

- 3. Expansion of the number of juvenile detention beds in Milwaukee County would be opposed by key community partners. Community Advocate groups like Youth Justice Milwaukee and others have publicly opposed the creation of new detention beds. They appropriately cite the current racial disparities in the use of detention as well as the availability of more effective community-

based treatment models as valid reasons. Further, expanding the number of detention beds would be opposed by key national advocacy groups like the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which provides ongoing technical assistance and support to Milwaukee County.

As indicated in the June County Board report (File No. 17-458) from the Honorable Maxine White, there is clearly a need to expand our capacity to serve the highest risk youth locally. DCSD remains committed to these efforts and will continue to pursue secure and staff secure treatment alternatives to meet this need. However, the creation of additional detention beds for the purpose of expanding MCAP is not feasible at this time.

### ***Implementing Female Specific MCAP Program***

As indicated in Chief Judge White's report, girls that enter the juvenile justice system have a different profile and present with different needs than boys. Of the Milwaukee County youth committed to Lincoln Hills or Copper Lake Schools for a crime against persons or weapon offense since January of 2014, only 7 percent were girls. This number represents only 11 girls since January 2014. As outlined by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (<https://www.ojjdp.gov/policyguidance/girls-juvenile-justice-system/>) and articulated by Judge White in her report, "First, we need alternatives to detention and incarceration for our females who have complex needs but pose little or no risk to public safety. These females should not be detained or incarcerated."

DCSD acknowledges the need for increased capacity of developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed programming to meet the needs of girls. We will continue to work with DCF, court and community stakeholders, and community providers to expand effective programming for girls. However, implementing "female specific MCAP programming" is not necessary and would not meet the need and would not provide the appropriate environment for treatment of girls. The continued pursuit of legislative changes allowing for the development of a secure residential treatment program would be a more viable and appropriate option.

### **Recommendation**

This report is informational and no action is required.



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