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Reflecting Best Practices in Budget Priorities*Juvenile Services Analysis Shows Shortcomings in Evidence-Based Practices, Aftercare Services***Executive Summary**

Fiscal analysts have shown that investing dollars in opportunities and services can produce positive outcomes while simultaneously creating savings. We must call on our State and local officials to act accordingly, particularly as budget shortcomings dictate that we must do more with less. Until the budget for the Department of Juvenile Services prioritizes funding for best practices and programs that have demonstrated successful outcomes, Maryland's youth, families, and communities will remain at risk.

Introduction

The Department of Juvenile Services presented its FY 2012 operating budget to the Maryland General Assembly in February and March.¹ The Department of Legislative Services offered a detailed analysis of the \$277 million proposed budget and trends in DJS' population and services.² The discussion that follows will focus on evidence-based practices and aftercare services. Both are critical components to improving successful outcomes among youth involved in Maryland's juvenile justice system.

Evidence-Based Practices

During his first term, Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley prioritized the expansion of evidence-based practices such as Multi-Systemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy, and Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care. All are alternatives to committed out-of-home placements for juveniles, and produce more successful outcomes than incarceration. However, as noted by the Legislative Services' analysis, underutilization of these services has enabled DJS to offset increases in its personnel expenses by reducing these services. Legislative Services notes a \$1.7 million reduction in funding for evidence-based practices during FY2012, and the loss of 54 treatment slots across the State. DJS

¹ Audio is available at <http://www.mlis.state.md.us/>. The House proceedings were February 25; the Senate proceedings were February 28.

² Analysis of the FY2012 Maryland Executive Budget, Department of Juvenile Services

attributes underutilization to the following factors: making the right number of slots available to meet the need of individual service regions,³ referring an insufficient number of youth to fill currently vacant slots, failing to account for upcoming discharges, ensuring that referrals were appropriate for the program, and ensuring that providers admitted clients in a timely fashion.⁴

The table below reflects the change in slots between 2010 and 2012:

| Region | Budgeted | | Projected Use | |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|
| | 2010 | 2011 | 2011 | 2012 |
| Baltimore City | 131 | 140 | 110 | 110 |
| Central | 53 | 52 | 52 | 48 |
| Western | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Eastern | 4 | 26 | 18 | 18 |
| Southern | 93 | 93 | 93 | 93 |
| Metro | 102 | 109 | 109 | 105 |
| Total | 383 | 428 | 382 | 374 |

Source: Department of Juvenile Services

Aftercare Services

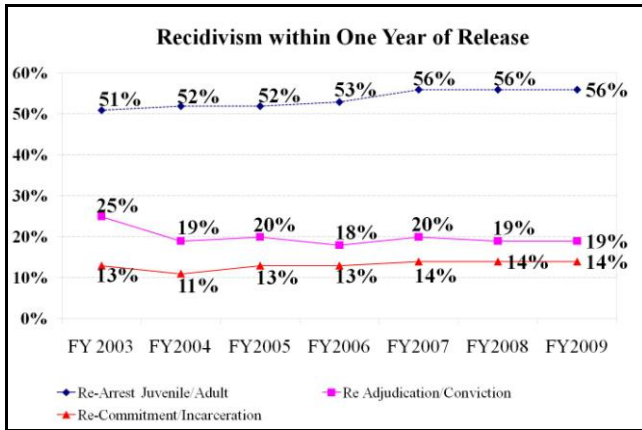
For years, Maryland youth leaving residential programs have had high recidivism rates. The re-arrest rates following one year after release have hovered above 50%. The chart below reflects all

³ The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services aims to provide services on a regional basis, and has the following six regions: Baltimore City, Central (Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard Counties), Western (Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington Counties), Eastern Shore (Caroline, Dorchester, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties), Metro (Montgomery and Prince George's Counties), and Southern (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties).

⁴ See Advocates for Children and Youth, *Expanding Multi-Systemic Therapy Rapidly Effectively, and Affordably: Lessons from Other States* (Jan. 2009).



Maryland's recidivism measures within one year of release: re-arrest juvenile / adult, re-adjudication / conviction, and re-commitment / incarceration.⁵



Research has shown that effective aftercare reduces recidivism by at least one-third,⁶ and Maryland has availed itself of federal resources to improve aftercare, particularly in Baltimore City. However, during the coming fiscal year, the federal funds DJS received for the Continuum of Opportunity Reentry Program and Services (CORPS) initiative, an enhanced aftercare program for youth returning to Baltimore City from out-of-home placements, are scheduled to expire. The initiative provides intensive case management, education assistance, vocational/job training and employment, and community service. With the loss of this funding stream and without new grant funds or reallocation of state dollars, DJS will lose a program that shows tremendous promise for youth returning to their communities after periods of incarceration.

Recommendations

Challenge the loss of funding for effective programs that improve public safety: Community members should contact the Governor, General Assembly members, and the Department of Juvenile Services Secretary to express concerns about budget

⁵ Analysis of the FY2012 Maryland Executive Budget, Department of Juvenile Services. See also, Department of Juvenile Services Annual Statistical Report, FY2010.

⁶ See, e.g., Steve Aos, *Washington State's Family Integrated Program for Juvenile Offenders: Outcome Evaluation and Benefit-Cost Analysis*, Washington State Institute of Public Policy (Dec. 2004); Jeffrey A. Bouffard, & Kathleen J. Bergseth, *The Impact of Reentry Services on Juvenile Offenders' Recidivism*, Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 6:295-318 (2008).

cuts for evidence-based practices and expiring funding streams for aftercare services.

Additionally, community members should advocate for revenue generating tax increases so that the State does not have to cut funds to programs that ensure public safety. The Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute has demonstrated how the State can levy additional taxes—alcohol, gas, sales, millionaire, and corporate—to raise revenues in order to prevent cuts to services that keep Maryland's youth, families, and communities safe.⁷

Improve utilization of evidence-based practices: DJS must address the causes of underutilization of evidence-based practices. Looking at other states and jurisdictions that have implemented these services can provide some specific strategies that Maryland can use to ensure that every youth who needs an evidence-based practice can get it. Additionally, DJS should explore opportunities to receive technical assistance from resources that help states build and strengthen their services.

Seek additional resources to maintain and expand enhanced aftercare services around the State: DJS must look for state dollars within its budget and seek additional federal grant opportunities to maintain the CORPS program within Baltimore City, and to enhance aftercare in other jurisdictions around the State. For instance, through May 2, 2011, the United States Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is seeking applications for the Second Chance Act Juvenile Mentoring Initiative. OJJDP will provide grants to support mentoring and other transitional services essential to reintegrating juveniles back into their communities.⁸ The Second Chance Act authorizes grants to government agencies and nonprofit groups to provide employment assistance, substance abuse treatment, housing, family programming, mentoring, victims' support, and other services to help adult and juvenile ex-offenders transition successfully from incarceration to the community.

⁷ See www.marylandpolicy.org

⁸ See <http://ojjdp.gov/funding/FundingDetail.asp?fi=225>