

Report outline

- a. Executive summary
- b. Overview of Working Group on Youth Interventions
 - i. Language from legislation
 - ii. Purpose of the working group
 - iii. Membership
- c. Overview of process used by the working group
- d. Meeting summaries (one paragraph overview of each meeting)
- e. Key research questions
 - i. Data summary of existing systems, current state
 - 1. Describe community-based programming, various treatment models, how programs operate, and the types of these services currently being provided in the state, including licensure model, and provide data specific to current total capacity and availability, level of care, outcomes, and costs.
 - ii. What are the licensing requirements from the State of MN to function as a residential treatment provider for youth with behavioral health needs?
 - 1. How are the licensing requirements different from DOCCR vs DHS?
 - 2. What barriers do our licensing requirements present for potential community providers?
 - iii. What can we learn about juvenile justice models across the nation that also have residential treatment centers? What models can best address the behavioral health needs of youth involved in the justice system? How have Juvenile rehabilitation systems partnered with community? What can we learn about these efforts that can inform this task force?
 - 1. Special focus on governance models.
- f. Recommendations
 - i. Regional system of care
 - ii. Programming best practices
 - iii. Workforce development
 - iv. Leadership, governance, and oversight
 - v. Fiscal strategies
 - vi. Data

Regional system of care

The current available collection of residential treatment facilities sometimes results in youths being placed significant distances from their home and community. Being far away from family/caregiver or supportive networks causes disruptions and has negative impacts. Creating a regional system of care, with more placement options closer to their families/caregivers and communities, would ease young people's movement between programs and settings, make it easier for them to stay connected with their families/caregivers or supports, and improve the ability of families/caregivers or supports to participate in treatment and transition planning.

These are the recommendations for building a regional system throughout the state:

1. Explore the establishment of regional out-of-home placement facilities throughout the state that will be closer to youths' home communities.
 - a. Support the creation of smaller facilities within these regions, including more facilities to provide crisis stabilization, residential treatment, and psychiatric residential treatment for youth.
 - b. Develop an adaptive and responsive continuum of care to address the mental health, behavioral health, community supports and other needs of youth and their families.
 - c. Examine and remove any barriers that prevent counties from entering into regional partnerships that would expand options for youth within their communities.
 - d. Explore statewide options to ensure secure detention bed space is available for all 87 counties.
2. Expand stabilization services and group homes for non-secure youth to create the ability to step-down from hospital and detention facilities when the home environment is not a viable option and/or provide an alternative to more restrictive placements.
3. Explore solutions to increase the number of community providers, to retain current providers, and to improve youth and family access to community providers closer to their home and community.
4. Provide resources (housing, childcare, counseling/support groups, etc.) to families and caregivers that are closer to the facilities, to promote healing and stability, enable families and caregivers to positively participate in the reintegration of a youth back into their home, and provide them tools to support the youth's continued progress after leaving the facility.

5. Explore the creation of family resource centers within these regions, and how they could support families across the continuum of care for youth.

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Programming best practices

These are recommendations for improving the programming offered in out-of-home placement facilities to better comply with best practices.

Recommendations:

1. Develop statewide program standards that incorporate trauma-informed care and culturally competent programming at all levels of care and operational responses.
2. Explore ways for out-of-home placement settings, including detention facilities, to have full-time mental health providers available so that a mental health clinician may be assigned to each youth.
3. Require the start of aftercare transition planning as soon as the youth arrives at the out-of-home placement facility to ensure that treatment goals, service needs, and barriers to success have been addressed prior to the youth returning to home and community.
4. Explore funding for facilities to create supportive, home-like environments that feature more open spaces, natural sunlight, common living, relaxation rooms, and step-down living.
5. Explore creating core support teams or a dedicated point-of-contact staff position within facilities that work with youth, family, and caregivers throughout the entirety of the youth's placement to facilitate the development of and their engagement in the treatment goals for the youth and in their aftercare transition back into the community.
6. Explore the establishment of youth mentorship programs within out-of-home placement facilities.

Workforce development

There is a persistent need for attracting and retaining qualified staff for residential treatment facilities for youth. Challenges include a lack of career pathways, inability to provide competitive wages, traumatic working conditions, and high staff turnover. Employee training and support programs are needed to ensure new staff readiness, continuing education for all staff, and improved workforce well-being.

These recommendations address the workforce needs impacting our system providers and community providers, including hiring, retention, salary, and wellness:

1. Explore creating career pathways and advancement opportunities for direct-care professionals, with enhanced incentives and benefits.
2. Develop statewide mandated trainings and establish a training institute to administer them, with technical and implementation support from the state.
 - a. Trainings should have a developmental and trauma-informed lens, should include the current understanding of youth brain development, gender, mental health, and cultural competencies.
3. Develop wellness and support programs for employees to help mitigate the residual trauma, stress, and other impacts experienced throughout their job duties.
4. Conduct stay interviews for staff (as opposed to exit interviews) to understand and develop effective retention strategies and positive workplace environments.

Leadership, governance, and oversight

Juveniles enter out-of-home placement, including residential treatment facilities via various pathways, including being court ordered through the criminal justice system or through human/social services. Facilities and service providers are governed by different government agencies and administrative rules. Counties are charged with administering contracts with providers for treatment programs, while the state's Department of Human Services and Department of Corrections provide oversight over licensing and compliance.

These are the working group's recommendations for licensing and governance of these facilities and systems:

1. Explore creating a structure where all licensing and compliance oversight functions and contracts with community residential facilities are administered within one state agency that also has broad oversight over programs that serve youth to improve integration and alignment.
2. Explore creating a licensing structure for community-based providers that is separate from the licensing structure for government providers.
3. Review and update Minnesota Administrative Rule Chapter 2960, "Licensure and Certification Programs for Children."
4. Explore statewide adoption of the "Crossover Youth Practice Model," which improves how systems work together to address the needs of young people who are at risk of becoming or already are dually involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.
5. For State agencies to explore programming, licensing, funding, and policy solutions for justice involved youth that have significant mental health needs to effectively move between correctional and DHS license facilities based on the type of services the youth require.

Fiscal strategies

There is an acute need for additional dollars across the spectrum of out-of-home placement settings and services to support and retain staff, improve access to programs for youths and families/caregivers, increase reimbursement for providers, and fund needed facility infrastructure improvements.

These are recommendations for fiscal strategies that would enable facilities and providers to provide the appropriate type and level of care that juveniles need:

1. Explore increasing reimbursement rates to providers.
2. Establish licensing and funding authority for short-term mental health services in DOC facilities.
3. Support the State's effort to apply for a Section 1115 Medicaid waiver to enable providers to utilize Medicaid funding for youth in all settings, including residential out-of-home placements.
4. Evaluate system changes for effectiveness and recidivism reduction and encourage any financial savings to be reinvested back into the system to support providers and facilities.
5. Explore changing the procurement process for community-based facilities so they can receive funding up front rather than wait for reimbursement.

Data

Juvenile justice agencies and rehabilitative health care providers all collect, define, and maintain data in fragmented systems that do not speak to each other. Major improvements and alignments are needed to track individual youth as they move through the continuum of care, to better coordinate services, and to produce comprehensive outcome reports.

These are the recommendations to improve data collection, data sharing and data analysis, to ensure transparency and data-driven decisions:

1. Establish better data collection requirements to create consistency in the data being collected and create shared definitions for common data elements between all partners in both the juvenile justice system and the child welfare system.
2. Explore ways to better facilitate data sharing between the Courts, Department of Corrections and the Department of Human Services systems.
3. Explore efficiencies and improvements around data systems to better streamline data entry and lessen the burden that creates a structural barrier for staff.
4. Explore the creation of a centralized data system (rather than two separate systems), which is youth-centered rather than case-centered.
5. Require race and ethnicity demographic reporting for youth in both the Department of Corrections and the Department of Human Services systems.