

Agency of Human Services

Juvenile Justice Commission Report January 1, 2005

This report is respectfully submitted in accordance with Act 142 of the Adjourned Session of the 66th Biennial General Assembly requiring a report from the Juvenile Justice Commission

Contents:

Introduction..... 3

2005 Strategic Plan and Recommendations 3

 System and Structural Enhancement 3

 Service Delivery and Practice Standards 7

Juvenile Justice Commission: 2003-2004 Activities..... 12

 Juvenile Justice Stakeholder Meetings 12

 AHS Reorganization Discussions 12

Stakeholder Sessions & Steering Committee Accomplishments 13

 Balanced & Restorative Justice: A Vermont Model 13

 Integrated Treatment for Young People Who Have 15

 Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues: A Vermont Model 15

 Detention and Community Alternatives 17

System & Structural Enhancements 18

 Vision, Guiding Principles and Outcomes..... 18

 2003-2004 Advisory Board Mergers 20

 AHS Reorganization and Youth Justice Unit 20

1. Introduction

In 2002, an act of the Vermont General Assembly formed the Juvenile Justice Commission. The Commission has been a catalyst to create a system that delivers developmentally appropriate services to young offenders and that reflects the needs of offenders, victims, and the community. In completing its work, the Commission has utilized interagency collaborations, community partnerships, and stakeholder forums to lay the groundwork for a continuum of prevention, pre-charge programs, and post-adjudication services.

Since 2003, the work of the Juvenile Justice Commission has been accomplished in the context of Agency of Human Services re-organization. The Commission, in the spirit of its charge from the legislature and in conjunction with the reorganization activities, conducted a series of well-attended stakeholder meetings that generated ideas, perspectives, values, and proposals. Following these meetings, several steering committees were formed to further work on a number of the identified priorities.

The 2005 Juvenile Justice Commission Report creates a strategic implementation plan to move Vermont towards a more integrated and seamless system of care for young offenders. The goal is a Youth Justice System that combines the values of Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ)--with a focus on offender, victim, and community--and the Vermont tradition of rehabilitation within the framework of developmental needs and family. Building on the work of the Commission and on recent progress in service design and delivery, the report outlines actions to address key outcomes. Later sections of the report provide background and summarize the work of the stakeholders and the steering committees that have helped inform this plan.

2. 2005 Strategic Plan and Recommendations

System and Structural Enhancement

Outcome #1: The Youth Justice Unit of the Department for Children and Families will provide advocacy, planning, and resource development for young offenders, and it will plan for the system and service structures necessary to deliver a continuum of responses, services, and assistance to meet their needs.

Progress:

Following the formation of the new Department for Children and Families (DCF) on 7/1/04, the Youth Justice Unit was created under the leadership of a Director of Youth Justice. The Director incorporated the role of the Juvenile Justice Director, Chair of the Commission. On 10/1/04, the staff of the Juvenile Justice Commission was transferred to DCF. This change has consolidated the resources of the former SRS and the Agency of Human Services (AHS) in the areas of planning, evaluation and management of federal grants targeted to delinquency and delinquency prevention. It also improves the integration of these efforts with best practice casework and the experience of direct service.

The Youth Justice Unit will focus on a system of care that addresses developmental issues, family perspectives, and therapeutic interventions balanced with community safety, accountability, victim's rights and needs, and community engagement. The resources of the new DCF, including early childhood initiatives, child abuse and neglect casework, child and family focused planning, balanced and restorative probation, and treatment-based placements create a prevention bulwark against future and further involvement in the criminal justice system.

Both DCF and the Department of Corrections are committed to providing the necessary services for young offenders. The two departments are fully engaged in planning and resource-sharing to address the issues that the Commission has identified. (see Outcome #2). New relationships with other state agencies have been established to better serve the treatment needs of young offenders. Of note is the collaboration with the Vermont Department of Health to address the needs of young offenders who have co-occurring mental health and substance abuse issues.

The Agency of Human Services reorganization, with its Field Director structure, provides improved opportunities on a local level to address systemic issues with broad community and state-agency alliances.

The newly restructured Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs will serve as the advisory board for the AHS youth justice and delinquency prevention initiatives. This board was recently restructured to assure coordination and oversight of a variety of AHS grants and initiatives that have primary prevention, positive youth development, delinquency prevention and youth justice as a common thread.

The Governor's Criminal Justice Cabinet has agreed to take a role in the analysis and assessment of the youth justice continuum and of potential structural change and related statutory and budgetary implications.

Recommendations:

- Eliminate the Juvenile Justice Commission and incorporate its purposes and activities into the Agency of Human Services, its departments, and its partners in government and communities.
- Fully recognize the on-going commitment of AHS by changing the status of the Director of Youth from exempt to classified.

Outcome #2: The Department for Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Corrections (DOC) address the needs of transition age youth in their systems with developmentally appropriate interventions and services, and they collaboratively complete an analysis of the 16-17 year old and 18-21 year old offender populations in both systems to prepare a plan for further action.

Progress and Action Steps:

Responding to youth who are transitioning to adulthood from DCF custody or supervision and youth who enter the adult system as young offenders has been a historical challenge. Considerations that must be addressed include statutory definitions and judicial structures, filing and sentencing practices, funding mechanisms, and agency and local resources and services. In addition, meeting the general needs of all transition age youth for housing, employment, education and training, mental health, substance abuse and medical treatment must be part of the solution for the particular population of young offenders.

- Successful planning depends on an accurate picture of the characteristics and needs of young offender. The Juvenile Justice Commission has focused on developing a functional data warehouse that will improve this analysis (see Outcome #3)

DCF and DOC have taken the following concrete steps to improve focus on transitioning youth:

- DOC has provided financial resources for a joint DOC-DCF position to focus on the needs of 16-17 year old misdemeanants who are detained by the Court. The person hired will be responsible for assisting the access to detention programs and developing alternative detention capacity for youth in both systems.
- DCF has re-allocated a staff member to focus fully on Youth Development. That specialist in DCF will support programs and best practice for transition age youth in DCF custody, including delinquents.
- DCF and DOC have signed a Memorandum of Understanding detailing circumstances under which 16 and 17 year old misdemeanants may be placed at the Woodside Juvenile Facility.
- Plans are being finalized for Vermont to participate in a comparative study of Blended Sentencing. The National Association of State Courts will tailor its research to complement the data collection and analysis of this outcome.
- DCF and DOC will manage data analysis in support of the plan to better address the needs of transition age youth in both systems. A larger group made up of policy managers, field staff and service providers will use the analysis, the products of Juvenile Justice Commission stakeholder groups, the results of the Blended Sentence study, and further feedback forums as needed to create a comprehensive strategy. The Governor's Criminal Justice Cabinet and the Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs will serve as forums to provide feedback and have offered to partner in whatever way

they can. The work will be completed by the end of 2005. Considerations of the strategy will include:

- ✓ Identify youth that are best served in the system and best served by which system
- ✓ Propose enhancements and/or changes to existing system structure
- ✓ Explore new funding mechanisms
- ✓ Propose statutory changes to support identified outcomes
- ✓ Identify collaborations with other agencies and the communities that will reduce the need for youth to enter DCF and DOC

Outcome #3: Databases and information services support Youth Justice planning and decision making

Progress and Action Steps:

- A Youth Justice Database, complete with FY03 and FY04 data has been developed. The database contains data from all AHS departments who serve youth through the adjudication process or through services to youth and their families as well as Family and District Court data. This data warehouse will be updated monthly by all the departments of the Agency of Human Services, as well as the courts. Plans are also being developed to include information from other sources that will provide the data needed to make good planning decisions for youth in the areas of employment, education and more.
- During the next year, the Youth Justice database will be further developed into the Youth Justice Decision Support System. The Youth Justice Decision Support System will provide field managers with integrated operational reports to assist them in identifying and providing services to youth in their jurisdiction. It will also provide program managers and policy-makers reliable and readily available information for outcome-based evaluation and outcome-driven decision making.

Outcome #4 : Vermont has value-based standards for Balanced and Restorative Justice programming and a conceptual continuum that can serve as the basis for long-term resource development.

Progress and Action Steps:

- The BARJ Steering Committee developed comprehensive guidelines for using balanced and restorative justice approaches for young people under 21. BARJ principles include:
 - Holding young offenders accountable to recognize the harm of their actions and repair the damage to the extent possible
 - Addressing the needs of the offender, the family, the victim, and the community
 - Providing opportunities to improve relationships within families and communities

- Improving the skills and competencies of those who offend to encourage productive participation in the life of the community
- A Youth Justice Unit staff member was certified as a BARJ trainer of trainers.
- A core continuum planning group consisting of representatives of DCF, DOC, Diversion, law enforcement, education, prosecutors, defenders, community organizations, and other interests will be charged to identify essential elements of BARJ programming at all levels of application: school and community conflict, pre-charge, pre-adjudication, post-adjudication in the community and in residential and secure settings.
- Opportunities to support community and local BARJ responses--involving schools, local law enforcement, and trained citizen-volunteers--at appropriate levels of intervention will be pursued.
- Based on the work of the continuum planning group, trainers from DCF, DOC, Center for Crime Victim Services, UVM and others will collaborate and share resources to increase the competencies and capacities of BARJ programs and the community.
- Statutory changes to support BARJ practice throughout the continuum of Youth Justice will be proposed.

Service Delivery and Practice Standards

Outcome #5: Youth on probation receive balanced and restorative programming in which victims have a role and the community is involved, and they will be helped to repair the harm their actions has caused.

Progress and Action Steps

- YouthNet, complementing juvenile probation social work and treatment plans, has become a fundamental component of Vermont's juvenile justice system. YouthNet programs, contracted to local agencies, provide the elements of accountability, community safety, competency development, and community integration that are the hallmarks of a successful Balanced and Restorative System. The programs give meaning and substance to juvenile probation and complement treatment as a strategy to prevent further involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice system. They include:
 - Streetcheckers,
 - Skill Building and Victim Impact and
 - Juvenile Restorative Probation, using both Restorative Panels and Restitution Programs

- BARJ program management, consistency, utilization, and integration with other community initiatives will be improved through training and on-site technical assistance from the Youth Justice Unit and through the development of the BARJ continuum (see Outcome #4).
- YouthNet programs have continued to operate in all 12 administrative districts of the state with success that has been both statistical and supported by inspiring anecdotal evidence. For example, extrapolating from the first three (federal) quarters of 2004, about 240 youth will participate in the Streetchecker program and about 80% will complete successfully. This year, close to 200 juvenile probationers will no longer need the extra support and supervision of the program to complete their conditions of probation or be successful in the community.

Streetcheckers operate in the context of the larger program design of Restorative Probation's community and victim involvement in accountability and reintegration. Community and victim participation in the Juvenile Restorative Panels provides for powerful accountability and the Restitution Program assures meaningful reparation and support to young offenders who would otherwise not have the means to achieve completion of their accountability obligations.

- YouthNet programs have been federally supported since inception—some since 1995. Currently, the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) is the sole funding source for all of YouthNet. JABG is eclipsing, and funding for the programs will end at the conclusion of this federal fiscal year (September 30, 2005).

In deciding to take ownership to sustain these successful efforts of intervention, prevention, and community integration, Vermont would underscore its commitment to an effective and meaningful juvenile justice system and to a prevention strategy to address to expanding pressure on the adult system.

Recommendation:

Fund Youth Net's Balanced and Restorative Programming for youth on juvenile probation with General Fund dollars to offset the loss in federal funds.

Outcome #6: Youth on probation receive professional and consistent services based on best practice principles of strength-based assessment, collaborative approaches, balanced and restorative justice, and graduated response.

Progress and Action Steps:

- Casework models of collaboration—with families, schools, and treatment providers--are supported and strengthened through training, including the statewide Collaboration Conference.

- The Juvenile Justice Work Group, made up of juvenile probation social workers and supervisors, continues to meet to problem-solve probation issues and to serve as a forum for training and best practice.
- The JJWG will identify training needs for the management of and service to youth on probation and resources needed to continue to improve graduated-response casework.
- The JJWG will collaborate with the UVM training partnership to develop appropriate training. At least one worker from each district will be responsible for maintaining state-of-the-art expertise in working with delinquent youth. Opportunities for cross training with others who routinely work with at-risk youth will be explored.
- Policies related to delinquency and probation management will be reviewed, updated, and created.
- Risk assessments that are developed will include identification of youth's strengths and assets to inform case planning.
- The Guide to Juvenile Probation for parents will be updated.

Outcome #7: Delinquent youth in the custody of DCF have short-term and detention placements to meet their level of risk, and they have a continuum of placement options to meet their treatment needs.

Progress and Action Steps:

- As part of DCF's Structured Decision-making casework practice initiative, a tool to help determine placement needs of youth in custody has been developed. In January 2005, these tools will be implemented.
- Using a standardized package of screening and assessment instruments, DCF will implement a plan in January 2005 to ensure that all children who enter custody receive an initial assessment of their needs.
- An initiative focused on foster parent recruitment and retention, Vermont Breakthrough, has been successful in implementing innovative ways to increase foster care capacity, retention and service improvement.
- Wraparound services and therapeutic case management collaborations with mental health partners and schools continue to evolve to maximize service and funding opportunities.
- The Case Review Committee, with membership from DCF, the Department of Education and the Mental Health Division of the Department of Health, and the Vermont Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health continues to screen high needs youth and match them with appropriate programs.

- A broad-based work group working under the auspices of the Juvenile Justice Commission and the Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs has reached consensus on certain purposes of detention and capacity questions. Their work effectively set forth the issues and questions about detention that must be addressed and will provide a base for future planning. (see *Section 4.C*)
- In collaboration with the Vermont Coalition of Residential Providers, DCF will conduct an analysis of the out-of-home system of care for children in custody, including delinquents. The work group will present recommendations in July 2005.
 - Short-term placement and detention capacity in the juvenile system will be addressed.
 - Opportunities to develop resources that benefit the short-term and detention capacities of both DCF and DOC and thereby maximize funding will be explored.
 - Identified gaps in the continuum of treatment and placement resources will result in program adjustments or a plan for new resources.
- In 2005, work will begin on development of risk/asset instruments for delinquents to aid in decision-making about resource allocation.

Outcome #8: Youth with Co-occurring Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues receive integrated assessment and treatment.

(see *Section 4.B*)

Progress and Action Steps:

- Guidelines for practice and an action plan have been developed by a cross-departmental work group composed of deputy commissioners and managers from ADAP, Department of Mental Health and Youth Justice.
- The first step in the action plan is to create funding streams that support integrated treatment approaches. Analysis of current funding streams is underway with plans to implement improved coordination of funds and create cross-department/division leverage to support treatment services for co-occurring issues.
- Several other workgroups are underway including a workgroup to address workforce development, including the creation of a licensure certification process for co-occurring treatment specialists.
- Two pilot projects are set to begin in early 2005 that will improve early identification of youth with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse issues in youth.

Outcome #9: Families using Drug and Family Treatment Courts receive an alternative to the criminal justice system which effectively meets substance abuse needs of participants and the permanency needs of children.

Progress and Action Steps:

- Several drug treatment courts working closely with children and youth have been created around the state. The Family Treatment Court in Chittenden County works predominately with young mothers with substance abuse issues who have had their children brought into the custody of the Department for Children and Families due to abuse and neglect. Two Adult Drug Treatment Courts are in operation in Rutland and Chittenden counties and many if not most of the clients are young adults between 18 and 24 years of age.
- A steering committee with representatives from the departments of the Agency of Human Services and the judiciary's statewide drug court team provides coordinated oversight and support to the implantation and operation of drug treatment courts.
- A workgroup with membership from the DCF, the Department of Health's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs, and the Statewide Drug Court Coordinator will develop a resource guide to support best practices and uniformity in the implementation and operation of drug treatment courts. Technical assistance to communities will be available.

Outcome #10: Youth Justice activities in the districts are networked to statewide initiatives, reflect the values of AHS reorganization, and are integrated with Field Directors' planning and collaborative approaches.

Progress and Actions Steps:

- Youth Justice teams in several communities provide a vehicle for local stakeholders to address a variety of topics to work together to improve the services and the systems that serve young offenders. Youth Justice staff will provide technical assistance and training to local Youth Justice Teams to keep them connected to statewide initiatives and funding opportunities through the CFCPP.
- The goal of a Youth Justice Team operational in every district, linked through forums and trainings, and full partners in Field Director planning will be pursued in partnership with local stakeholders.

- Youth Justice staff will act as a liaison to Field Directors on important statewide projects and practice standards and they will keep them informed of funding opportunities.
- Navigator functions in AHS departments will improve access to services for youth and families.

Background and Summaries of Work to Date

3. Juvenile Justice Commission: 2003-2004 Activities

Juvenile Justice Stakeholder Meetings

The Juvenile Justice Commission began holding stakeholder meetings in July of 2003. Approximately 350 people were invited from around the state. In addition, invitations were sent to all members of the General Assembly.

In 2003, 194 people participated from every region of the state participated in seven work groups. These sessions struggled with difficult and controversial questions related to youth justice in Vermont. Topics ranged from an identification of strengths and weaknesses in our system to discussions about what the state structure should look like.

Several issues were unanimously recommended for follow-up:

1. Adoption of vision, guiding principles, values and outcomes;
2. Better integration and structure of juvenile justice services within AHS and across State government;
3. Planning to address the needs of transition-age youth, 16-21 including the State's role versus the role of the community in handling 16-17 year old misdemeanants and unmanageable youth;
4. Adoption of "Balanced and Restorative Justice" as guiding principles across all efforts for youth in the juvenile justice system;
5. Creation of a plan for implementing integrated treatment for mental health and substance abuse in youth under the age of 21

AHS Reorganization Discussions

Throughout the inquiry process, the agency committed itself to hearing as many voices as possible. The most important of these, and the most difficult to hear, are the voices of our consumers and other program participants. Recognizing this, the agency worked closely with UVM to identify 17 different consumer constituency groups to invite into separate focus group discussions. As part of this effort the Juvenile Justice Commission, through federal funds, supported several such groups including, youth mandated to the Woodside

Juvenile Rehabilitation Center, parents of youth in protective services, foster parents, parents of youth with severe emotional disturbances and parents of youth with multiple disabilities. These groups were professionally facilitated by UVM faculty and graduate students. In order to encourage members of the focus groups to be as candid as possible and to assure confidentiality, the agency did not participate in the groups and does not have information about the names of participating individual. The findings of these and other discussions in the reorganization inquiry process resulted in the identification of 10 themes or guiding principles for reorganization. Many of these themes are in keeping with what we heard from stakeholders in the youth justice system during stakeholder sessions and work groups, and include:

- Respectful service, valuing the assets and strengths of individuals, youth and families
- Access to services
- Prevention
- Collaboration with key partners
- Support youth and families through the transition
- Continuous improvement and accountability
- Strong information systems & communication

In addition, youth justice stakeholders agreed on the importance of:

- Fostering youth and community partnerships;
- Ensuring youth and family members have an integral role at every level;
- Ensuring strengths based approaches to assuring positive youth development and strong families
- Providing opportunities for victim involvement;
- Serving youth with developmentally appropriate services.

4. Stakeholder Sessions & Steering Committee Accomplishments: 2004

A. Balanced & Restorative Justice: A Vermont Model

In 2003 youth justice stakeholders in Vermont agreed that:

- A unified framework and definition of Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) principles should be incorporated across all of AHS programming;
- When dealing with young people, the inclusion of the family voice is essential ; and
- There needs to be a balance between state level oversight and local flexibility to address local community needs

In the spring of 2004 three working sessions were held to address the creation of a Vermont Model for Balanced and Restorative Justice for all agencies involved in the Youth Justice System. Participants developed:

- Quality guidelines for using a balance and restorative justice approaches for young people under 21 in Vermont;
- Mapping of youth justice programs in existence across Vermont by region (these ranged from local pre-charge programs to community high schools run by the Department of Corrections);
- Identification of needs and suggested next steps for implementing the BARJ quality framework; and
- Technical assistance from UVM to assist with the outcomes and implementation of BARJ on a statewide basis.

Stakeholders recommended specific changes needed in Vermont's youth justice system in order to fully and effectively implement balanced and restorative justice principles.

Recommendations received fell into four broad categories:

1. *Training* –a greater focus on training and establishing standards for staff competencies for all individuals' youth and families in the youth justice system (including volunteers and community partners).
2. *Structural and Service System Changes* –exploration of:
 - Originating petitions for 16 & 17 year old offenders in juvenile court with the option to waive up to adult court;
 - Mechanisms to promote consistency in processes available to all communities and attention to quality oversight, involvement and satisfaction of participants and use of accommodations whenever needed for persons with disabilities;
 - Ways to empower local governments and law enforcement to shift from a punitive/correctional framework to a restorative justice framework and more family centered and strengths based approach to working with families.
3. *Legislative and Policy changes* – potential areas that could benefit from policy and/or statutory guidance:
 - Policies to that promote practices that reflect the principles outlined in "Guidelines for Building BARJ";
 - Legislation to promote BARJ and provide necessary resources for pre-charge and law enforcement involvement and to create more avenues for restorative justice to be involved before or despite adjudication processes;
 - Policy and practice initiative to ensure that no youth ages out of the system without an identified, permanent, lifelong connection;
 - Changes in confidentiality laws regarding minors.
4. *Funding* --Increased and stable commitments to funding of services such as:
 - Trained facilitators to work with families, youth, victims, and communities and to assist families to move through the restorative process;

- Life skills and transitional supports to help empower youth into successful adulthood;
- Supports to communities to prevent crime, support victims, assess crime patterns, identify no-cost and low-cost mechanisms to address them, and identify funding sources for those strategies needing additional funds.

Stakeholders identified the following five areas as most critical:

1. Training
2. Statewide uniform screening & assessment for youth that includes data on youth progress and outcomes.
3. Guidelines for all balanced and restorative process and public education
4. Services that are available where youth and families live.
5. Legislation to establish BARJ principles and to authorize adequate and sustainable funding.

To respond to these priorities, a steering committee formed in April 2004 to draft BARJ guidelines. That work has been completed. Membership includes DCF, JJC, Community Justice Centers, Diversion, Court Administrator's Office, DOC, Center for Crime Victim Services, Vermont Coalition for Homeless and Runaway Youth Programs, Woodside, Department of Public Safety, Juvenile Defender and consumers of the youth justice system.

B. Integrated Treatment for Young People Who Have Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues: A Vermont Model

Four sessions were held in 2004 to address the creation a unified framework for the delivery of integrated treatment for young people under the age of 21 years old. Over 90 stakeholders participated in this effort including community providers, AHS staff, youth and their families, diversion, law enforcement and other community stakeholders. These working sessions resulted in:

- The creation of screening protocols and practice guidelines for working with young people under the age of 21.
- The identification of challenges and solutions to implementing integrated treatment
- The creation of a deputy & senior management level steering committee within the AHS, specifically charged with the creation of a implementation plan for integrated treatment across all AHS departments, divisions, programs and offices working with young people under 21.

Recommendations fell into four broad categories and included:

1. The creation of funding streams that will support integrated treatment approaches.

This included such suggestions such as:

- Amend Medicaid billing to allow for more and a broader range of billable diagnosis codes including more than one diagnosis code;

- Change reimbursement structures; amend rate setting structure to allow for cross-department/cross-agency funding;
- Engage third party insurance to change their reimbursement to include integrated treatment, case management, and support services;
- Define support services necessary for integrated treatment,
- Identify gaps in service, and develop funding strategies.

2. Assure that organizational structures and cultures will embrace both a.) Collaborative and integrated treatment approaches; and b.) Family and youth-centered practices:

Suggestions included:

- Provide cross departmental training and professional development options;
- Facilitate a culture shift to an integrated treatment approach;
- Make access to integrated treatment easier for youth and families
- Create an integration of licensing practices to facilitate dual licensure in integrated treatment for professionals.

Additionally, stakeholders noted the need for the increased the use of family and youth-centered, child focused approaches across the AHS continuum. This included a strong focus on strength based and youth and family empowerment approaches to services.

3. Assure that State government and private non-profits will devote training and professional development resources to support the shift to integrated treatment.

This included:

- Cross discipline training for clinicians;
- Requiring Cue's in Co-occurring Disorders;
- Requiring Co-occurring Disorders training in MSW programs in state;
- Statewide education campaign with local partner implementation, including local MDs, nurses and pharmacists;
- Training to improve customer service, particularly first contact;
- Training for families – mentor system (such as in NH); training to schools on how to access service system (Saps);
- Training to advocacy groups and parents;
- Training to the Department of Education, schools, and teachers;
- Market existing resource guides and only develop new resource guides as needed to provide resource information for every community;
- Enhancing information for the 7-21 year old age group;
- Cross discipline team meetings in every community;
- Develop requirement for training on integrated treatment for professional licensure.

4. Assure that State government and non-profits will follow the same standards for integrated treatment in all mental health and substance abuse treatment settings.

Suggestions in this area included:

- Train providers on practice standards and monitor through follow up.
- Create common vocabularies.
- Screen for mental health issues in substance abuse settings;
- Screen for substance abuse issues in mental health settings.
- Rectify any conflicts/contradictions between confidentiality regulations (HIPPA, FERPA, 42CFR) and create a common, general release form in each community to include all area services that fully address confidentiality concerns;
- Develop, publicize, and train on protocols for what will happen with information that is shared; include grievance procedure.
- Provide equal access to geographically-based services across the state.
- Write outcome-based requirements into all Agency of Human Services contracts.
- Develop the technological IT links necessary to share data.
- Reconcile outcome expectations across departments/divisions and develop common indicators and outcome-based requirements across departments/divisions.
- Address transportation issues as an element of access to care.

In August/September of 2004 a team of senior managers in the Divisions of Child Welfare and Youth Justice, Mental Health and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs was charged with reviewing the practice guidelines, stakeholder's suggestions to create an action plan for implementation of Integrated Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment for all youth under age 21 in Vermont. That plan of implementation is due to the Secretary's Office by January of 2005.

C. Detention and Community Alternatives

During the spring and summer of 2004, the Juvenile Justice Commission and the Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs began to explore the need to address Vermont's use of detention and community alternatives. A broad based work group was created to include representation from the Vermont Criminal Justice Research Center; the State's Attorneys Association, the Vermont Coalition of Homeless and Runaway Youth Programs; the Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs; DCF (then SRS); Juvenile Defender's Office; Judges and Family Court personnel; DOC, Woodside, and other AHS departments.

The purpose of the group was to assess and draft recommendations for youth detention reform, including alternatives to detention that should be utilized in Vermont. The committee identified that it needed to be inclusive of the *detention system continuum* which includes 'staff secure' detention (non-locked facility staffed by adults who prevent youth from leaving the premises at will).

The work group agreed that the purpose of detention should be, in part, to:

1. Assure court appearance of youth where there is risk of flight
2. Assure community safety where youth present high risk of continuing delinquent or criminal behaviors
3. Sanction for probation violation when behavior is a danger to others and beyond control of family and community resources

Other purposes and practices were discussed. Agreement was not reached on the following uses:

1. Punitive sentence, post adjudication. Majority of members supports the need for youth sanctions that are immediate and meaningful, but not punitive.
2. Conditional detention to gain youth compliance e.g. until evaluation or other court order is accomplished / agreed to. Need for a 'bottom line'.
3. As motivation for probation compliance; an option expected to reduce a future risk of probation violation.
4. Violation of a valid court order- in CHINS (non-delinquent) e.g. truancy or unmanageability. Youth noncompliant w/ 'staff secure' placement.
5. Sanction option in juvenile drug court (steering committee has not supported secure detention for youth whose primary need is substance abuse treatment or evaluation. This proposed need may be met by a community-based staff-secure substance abuse treatment-oriented facility)
6. Need to clarify 'at risk to self'. Definition should be narrow so as not to include run-away. Agreement and recommendation for non-detention capacity / alternative to detention for immediate mental health / safety evaluation and crisis needs (for non-hospital eligible youth).

Recommendations from this group included both resource and processes recommendations, such as the need for specialized non-secure placement resources for treatment of 10 – 12 year olds (separate from older youth); specialized mental health and/or substance abuse oriented placements; gender based programs; short-term placement stabilization services. Process recommendations included: effective coordination among all existing community and state resources (prior to the allocation of additional resources); consistent use of 'reason for Woodside admission' data; development and use of risk assessment instrument and use of consistent criteria for admissions and discharge.

5. System & Structural Enhancements

Vision, Guiding Principles and Outcomes

A vision statement and identification of guiding principles for program development and outcomes for the youth justice system were created on the recommendation of and with input from over 100 stakeholders. These statements are outlined below.

VISION (The desired future state): The Youth Justice system is a component of the system of care, and it fosters and encourages a partnership between communities, schools, youth,

families, and the State that promotes opportunities for youth and families to attain success through a network of preventive, restorative, and intervention services, resulting in our youth:

- Choosing healthy behaviors
- Living in healthy communities and strong families
- Succeeding in educational opportunities
- Successfully entering adulthood

GUIDING PRINCIPLES. These principles will guide decision-making and include:

- A unified framework for balanced and restorative justice across Vermont Programs
- Clear and agreed-upon outcomes of success
- Promotion of community, schools, family and youth strengths, assets and resiliency
- Shared programming and financing to assure and improve coordination and access to quality services
- Input and feedback from stakeholders resulting in continuous improvement
- Use of culturally competent and gender responsive approaches

OPERATIONAL GOALS. Through programming and operations we will strive to assure that:

- Youth and families are connected to, and engaged in, their communities
- Prevention and early identification services are available to all children
- Timely and efficient movement of juveniles, from initial point of conflict through resolution (including pre-charge through adjudication and disposition)
- A consistent, state-wide system of care which includes positive alternative activities for youth
- State and local entities use common definitions, standards, data gathering and evaluation for service delivery and decision-making
- Shared information and data across all agencies and clear guidelines for confidentiality and collaboration are promulgated
- Effective technical training and support and accountability for all providers and staff involved in the youth justice system
- Youth services, judicial and law enforcement staff that are caring and knowledgeable in effective intervention and treatment options
- Service and programming decisions are made based on outcomes
- Public resources are used efficiently and effectively

OUTCOMES in the following AHS indicator groupings were suggested to assure that measures of success guide program quality, priorities, and fiscal appropriations .

- *Youth are succeeding in school.* Examples: increase in HS & GED graduation rates; increase in school attendance rate

- *Youth are successfully entering adulthood.* Examples: decrease in number of youth in shelters; decrease in substance abuse related arrest ages 16-21; decrease in young people 16-21 entering adult criminal justice system
- *Youth are living in healthy communities and strong families.* Examples: decrease in youth entering SRS custody; decrease in juvenile delinquency petitions; decrease in number of children deemed "unmanageable; increase in victim & community report of satisfaction with restitution and/or problem resolution processes
- *Youth are choosing healthy behaviors.* Examples: increase in students participating in youth programs Decrease in students using marijuana within the last 30 days Decrease in students using alcohol within the last 30 days Decrease in young teen pregnancy rate (ages 15-17)

2003-2004 Advisory Board Mergers

In January of 2004 recommendations for Advisory Board membership were submitted to the Governor. This represented the consolidation of several AHS central office boards related to delinquency prevention and juvenile justice. The new advisory group will include representatives from all categories mandated by federal funding requirements, including the Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs (CFCPP), the former 'Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee', the 'Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalition', and the 'Safe and Drug Free Schools Advisory Committee'. Emphasis and recruitment efforts have been made to strengthen the role of youth and family representation. This restructured board will assure coordination and oversight of a variety of AHS grants and initiatives that have primary prevention, positive youth development, delinquency prevention and youth justice as a common thread.

AHS Reorganization and Youth Justice Unit

Information received during the youth justice stakeholder process and from AHS reorganization feedback lead to the creation of a Youth Justice Unit within the newly formed Department for Children and Families. This unit is part of the Division of Child Welfare and Youth Justice. The roles and responsibilities identified for the unit were based, in part, on the legislative charge to the Juvenile Justice Commission, and, in part on the opportunity to provide policy, training, and casework practice focus within the Department. On October 1, 2004, the unit was created, merging 5 FTE staff from the Secretary's office into the Department for Children and Families Youth Justice Unit.

Unit Staffing: The five staff that merged includes 3 positions supported with federal OJJDP funds and 2 positions created as part of the initial Juvenile Justice Commission legislation supported with state general fund. Additionally, the position of Juvenile Justice Commission Director, as called in legislation, assumed the role of Unit Director within DCF.

In addition to these existing staff, a joint position was created in partnership with Department of Corrections to replace critical DOC functions and placement support services for youthful offenders and 16-17 year old misdemeanants. This position will monitor and support the needs of 16-17 year old misdemeanants requiring detention and will assist in bridging the systems to allow for appropriate youth to be placed at Woodside per the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Corrections and the Department for Children and Families.

Youth Justice Unit Collaborating Agencies: Over the past 2 years, collaborations have been established with various state and local agencies. These partnerships will continue and include: the Judiciary, Department of Public Safety, DOC, DMH, ADAP, Public Defenders, Education, Aging and Disabilities, Employment and Training, Vermont Center for Justice Research, VIBRS, Vermont Federation of Families, Diversion, Regional Partnerships, Community Justice Centers, VT Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs, UVM, and various other state and community groups

Advisory Board: The newly restructured Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs will serve as the advisory board for the AHS youth justice and delinquency prevention initiatives.