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Posted: 12:00 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 12, 2012

Juvenile sex offender cases fall by 17%

Community-based treatment is key for the rehabilitation

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By [Kelli Wynn](#)

Staff Writer

DAYTON, Ohio — The state credits community-based treatment efforts, designed to deliver more effective rehabilitation and save money, for a 17 percent decline in juvenile sex offenders over a three-year period.

The Ohio Department of Youth Services reported that 85 juvenile offenders were admitted into DYS in 2011 for sex-related crimes that included rape, gross sexual imposition and sexual battery. Year-to-date figures in 2012 suggest a 48 percent decrease in these type of offenders statewide.

“Over the last several years, we’ve been able to drastically reduce our facility population. Admissions of all categories (person, property, drugs, etc.) are down,” said Kimberlee Parsell, public information officer for the Ohio Department of Youth Services.

The average daily facility population for DYS dropped to 730 in 2011 from 1,293 in 2009. As of July, the 2012 daily average was 567.

The state’s collaboration with community partners — which has been in place since 2008 — is the main reason for the reduction, Parsell said. The system is designed to provide appropriate services for youth by matching risk level with the least restrictive program setting.

“This not only saves the state a lot of money, but it gives kids a real second chance, the opportunity for rehabilitation to take place,” Parsell said.

The state spends approximately \$8 million a year to fund evidence-based programs in communities through Targeted RECLAIM and Behavioral Health and Juvenile Justice initiatives. The goal is to reduce criminal behavior, which diverts youth from DYS.

“Utilizing these alternatives, the participating counties in these initiatives reduced their admissions to DYS facilities by a total of 712 youth over the last three years,” Parsell said. “Savings are realized by the reduction (of kids) in DYS facilities.”

Counties participating in these initiatives include Montgomery and Hamilton. These counties are selected based on the number of youth committed to DYS by the judicial system.

“We’re placing the right kids in the right environment and not mixing lower-level youth with the

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higher-end youth who are better served in one of the DYS facilities,” Parsell said. “By serving the right youth in the local community, we’re keeping them close to family and affording them a good chance of turning their lives around.”

DYS has four correctional facilities statewide that treat juvenile sex offenders. The closest to southwest Ohio is the Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility, but there are other options in the region.

“Montgomery County is setting a precedent nationally, in my opinion, because they have opened up a high-risk residential facility right here in town, to be able to keep our kids here,” said Richard Gulley, program director for Lighthouse Youth Services, a counseling agency that treats low- to high-risk juvenile sex offenders from throughout the region.

Lighthouse also serves high-risk youth being housed at the Juvenile Cognitive Alternative Rehabilitative Effort-Special Treatment Program located at the Montgomery County Juvenile Justice Center, 380 W. Second St.

Gulley said that Lighthouse data dating back to 2004 revealed that the youth services agency has had zero percent recidivism on sexual offenses and about 22 percent recidivism on non-sexual offenses.

“National statistics say that an adolescent who is caught, adjudicated and successfully completes a sex offender specific treatment program is very unlikely – to the tune of 96 percent – not to recidivate sexual behavior,” Gulley said, adding that the Lighthouse is in line with the national average.

Juvenile Court Judge Anthony Capizzi, president of the Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges, described the juvenile sex offenders he sees in his Montgomery County courtroom as being “a substantial number of family and friends who used trickery, gifts, bribes or threats to hide their acts.”

“Forty to 80 percent have been sexually abused themselves,” said LaToya Gregory, Sex Offender Program administrator for the Ohio Department of Youth Services, of juvenile sex offenders. The majority of the offenders are male.

The victims in Capizzi’s cases range between the ages of 2 months and 17 years old.

“Most adolescent offenders describe the incident as consensual,” Gulley said. “Now, the law says you cannot give consent under the age of 13.

“For the younger ones you have to sort out what is sexually reactive behavior versus what is sexually abusive behavior,” he said. “If a 15- or 16-year-old adolescent talks a 5, 6, 7, 8-year-old child into some sexual behavior, bribes them, coerces them, you have intimidation, which could be considered force under my definition. For the simple fact that they are bigger, they’re smarter, they’re more savvy about what’s going on. The child has no idea what they are agreeing to.”

Under Ohio Law, a child under the age of 13 cannot give consent for sexual activity.

“If an 11-year-old has sex with an 11-year-old, that is statutory rape between both children,” Capizzi said.

Adolescents can be adjudicated as a result of a sexual encounter in which the victim was not manipulated. An example of this type of situation would be if a 14-year-old was caught having sexual intercourse with a 12-year-old.

“Educating them about the law tends to make them not recidivate in a sexual way,” Gregory said.

Under certain circumstances, children 14 and older can be labeled as sex offenders, Capizzi said. If a child is under 14, they cannot be labeled as a sex offender.

Two years ago, offenders between 16 and 18 had to be classified as a certain type of offender,

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similar to classifications of adult offenders. At that time, it was at the judge's discretion on what to do with offenders under 16.

"Now it's almost all discretionary," Capizzi said.

Ohio's version of the Adam Walsh Act, which classifies sex offenders in three tiers, states that all youth who were 16 or 17 at the time of their offense are required to register. It also states that youth who were 14 or 15 at the time of their offense and who have had a prior adjudication for a sexually oriented offense must register. A judge may consider lowering or removing registration requirements if the juvenile participates in a certified sex offender treatment program.

"We look at the kid holistically and then we route them into different programs based on what they need," Gregory said. "The parents are involved and they are available every step of the way."

Sometimes treatment reveals that there may be a history of sexual abuse in the offender's family.

"To me it's the number one social problem in America today," Gulley said. "Unfortunately, sexual abuse in this country is still accepted based on my opinion on how we look at things. It's not reported. It's overlooked. Families frequently protect the child offender over the child victim, particularly when we see there is a male child."

When asked what parents should be doing in order to prevent unlawful sexual activity among juveniles, Gregory said parents need to be mindful of their children's activities and behaviors.

"Kids should be hanging out with their peers," she said. "Parents need to understand that most abuse happens at home."

Gregory also stressed the dangers of children being exposed to pornography: "In some, but not all cases, viewing these materials could be one of many high-risk factors for this population."

Once treatment is finished, it is possible for an offender who has abused another child living in his or her home to return to the same home where the victim lives.

"We would do this only if the family was requesting this placement, and the family and victim do not have concerns of future victimization," Parsell said of the state's view. "The judge would have to agree to do this, and we would monitor the situation closely."

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Posted by [oncefalendotcom](#) at [11:10 a.m. Aug. 12, 2012](#)

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Treatment, rehabilitation, and reentry are keys for all those forced to register, not just the juveniles. Laws based upon revenge have backfired, increasing the likelihood of new crimes committed, while perpetuating the social ostracism and vigilante violence that ensures that increase will continue.

More truth at oncefalendotcom

Posted by [Virtue-Seeker](#) at [3:46 a.m. Aug. 13, 2012](#)

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This would be very encouraging if the statistics reflected a reduction in the number of actual



incidents as opposed to the reduced number of a smaller demographic, (convicted offenders) which is a subset of an even smaller demographic, (offenders who were reported). Sadly, the encouraging trend is possibility tainted by the fact that many juvenile offender cases may go unreported. To make matters worse, when schools actually scold students as young as 6 for reporting such incidents, instructing them to not be, "TATTLE TALES", it provides a vastly different perspective on perhaps a contributing factor rendering the 17% decrease as less than credible. Could it be that the school district in Montgomery County which admonishes students for reporting such incidents, has managed to indoctrinate sufficient numbers of students to take at least partial credit for influencing this positively perceived though perhaps specious statistical achievement?

It is always comforting to hear positive indications about our human condition. However, comforting as this piece of statistics might be, the honest factual bottom line might not be as comforting as first thought or perhaps worse than even imagined. What is needed to keep the children safe is to teach them to speak up when they see or experience circumstances which they instinctively know to be of a violating nature. However, when we begin to scold our children for reporting such incidents, we not only mute the frontline eyes and ears on this issue, but we embolden the offenders. I hope that this is fully considered before we actually begin patting ourselves on the back. Also a school district with a 5.9 Mil levy on the ballot should not be scolding students for reporting any incidents, covering up the matter and disregarding court orders addressing the safety and protection of its students. Kids need to know that they have a voice and that it is appreciated. How many of the Penn State victims were also taught to not be, "TATTLE TALES"?

A false sense of self assurance, especially when it concerns our children, can have devastating consequences.



Posted by [rufustfirefly3](#) at [7:49 a.m. Aug. 13, 2012](#)

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Now please do not take this the wrong way. I do not and never will condone this activity and I would have a hard time trusting any adult that took advantage of a child. Here is my point. Homosexuals say they were born desiring people of the same sex and they deand that everyone accept their lifestyle. Noew what if pedephiles are born with urges to younger people. How can we punish them or look down upon them because they were born that way. Our society does not expect homosexuals to exercise self control and they are allowed to live an unnatural and detestable lifestyle inwhich if we do not accept we are labled haters. So why should we expect or demand that these people practice selfcontrol. Many of you might say well this is different because with homosexuality it is two consenting adults. Your right it is. That does not make it alright or something we all should endorse through accepting it as normal. It is unnatual and abnormal. I would say that a pedephile that targets the opposite sex is more natural than two adult homosexuals living the homosexual lifestyle. My point is if you say someone is born with a sexual propensity and it is ok then you need to be consistant and say everyone is born with certain sexual urges and that we should not expect them to control. Yes I am being the devils advocate but I need to be to get people to realize the slippery slope that homosexuals are trying to lead us down.

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