



Department of
Youth Services

Message from DYS Director Harvey Reed

Ohio Interagency Task Force on Mental Health and Juvenile Justice

Progress Report

June 27, 2013

Dear Staff and Stakeholders:

I am excited to share with you the progress being made to advance mental health and juvenile justice. A full progress report is available on our website at www.dys.ohio.gov (click on "Mental Health Progress Report, June 2013" under "Featured Links"). Along with a wide range of professionals, organizations, public servants, families and others, we are taking steps to more effectively meet the needs of juvenile-justice involved youth with mental health concerns.

One of the advancements we have made is implementing a Community Linkage program for youth. Community Linkage Workers, provided by the Ohio Department of Mental Health, collaborate with community behavioral health boards and providers, connect youth to community/peer supports, assist with public benefit applications, support reconnection with family members and refer to other support networks to foster successful community reentry. These workers secure appropriate linkage to services and supports for the youth, establish relationships with stakeholders, collect data, analyze outcomes and maintain timely and quality information dissemination to the community. They also will work closely with facility and parole staff, local education systems, community behavioral health providers, and Family and Children First Councils to address the reentry needs of the youth served by Community Linkage.

Another important initiative underway is implementing a statewide, standardized trauma screening process. A workgroup convened by the Ohio Office of Health Transformation will evaluate the feasibility of implementing a trauma screening tool for high-risk youth. The workgroup is charged with recommending the tool, training, protocols and implications for treatment. DYS received a grant from Ohio Attorney General DeWine to assist with this effort in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders. The tool will be piloted at juvenile detention centers and potentially used in other child and youth systems. The screening tool will be an important first step in helping link youth in need of advanced mental health treatment with care when a youth leaves detention and reenters the community.

I appreciate the many partners and dedicated staff who are helping us move forward with these important initiatives.